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**Attachment to Place:**

**Towards A Strategy for Architectural Practice**

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**Doctor of Philosophy in Architecture**

The University of Edinburgh

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## **Abstract**

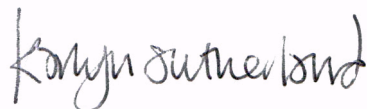
Attributable to the legacy of modernism, within the Western world there exists a widespread and as-yet unresolved sense of detachment from place; our contemporary, globalized condition has given rise to a visually-biased, alienating architecture lacking in meaningful, human connections to site or context, relying all too often upon the abstract projections of the distant and objective architect rather than on the realities of needs and experience.

Whilst the field of environmental psychology (within which the topic of place has been widely researched) has suggested theoretical solutions, few practical methods for the translation of relevant findings into strategies for the generation of place and attachment have been developed. Following a literature review, this thesis identifies two key place-related theories which address the characteristics and psychological impact of the physical environment (Attention Restoration Theory (Kaplan, 1995) and Canter's place theory (1977)); in binding these theories to architectural practice, the author offers a strategy capable of aiding the successful understanding and creation of place.

Providing an architectural brief to which this study responds, the practice-based element of this research focuses upon the context of North Lands Creative Glass, in Lybster, Caithness. Through a personal account of the impact of place and its manifestation within the author's works in glass, mixed media and on paper, this thesis proceeds to promote an honest, haptic narrative between the architect and the realities of context and experience; in doing so, it illustrates how an architecture conducive to a sense of place and attachment could be understood and created successfully.

## Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis; that the following thesis is entirely my own work; and that no part of this thesis has been submitted for another degree or qualification.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Koryn Sutherland". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Koryn" is written in a larger, more prominent script, and "Sutherland" follows in a similar but slightly smaller script. The signature is positioned above a dotted line.

Signed .....



## **Acknowledgements**

There are many people who, knowingly or not, have helped to make my research and creative practice what they are. I won't name them all (mostly for fear of missing someone out), but I will take this chance to briefly thank those without whom this thesis would never have been written.

First and foremost I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr. Chris Speed and Dr. Soledad Garcia Ferrari, who from the beginning have encouraged me to go beyond the boundaries of what was expected. Their critical thinking, support and good humour have been invaluable. I am also particularly grateful to Chris Lowry for the enthusiastic conversations about design and making, and to the Trustees of the Andrew Grant Scholarship Fund for both the opportunity to undertake this body of research and the generous financial support that allowed me to do so.

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Finally, I would like to thank my parents for instilling in me a sense of ambition and a curiosity for making (even though I know that they are both too modest to even entertain the idea that I might have inherited either from them). Their belief in my abilities has never faltered, even in those moments when none of us were really sure what I was doing; for this I will always be grateful.

*For absent friends.*

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## Preface

This body of research arose from the author's chance reading of an environmental psychology text during the closing stages of the Diploma in Architecture course (Architecture and Well-being unit, 2007 - 2008 session) at Edinburgh College of Art. The author's design project, a community arts scheme in suburban Edinburgh, had explored the ways in which the psychological requirements of an individual<sup>1</sup> could perhaps be met by their physical environment. This led, latterly, to reading on the topic of restorative environments and the process of self-regulation, and to the following statement by Korpela, Hartig, Kaiser & Fuhrer (2001, p. 573):

‘The observation that people use particular places for self and emotion regulation is common to research on place identity, place attachment, and restorative environments’.

Upon acceptance of the Andrew Grant Scholarship at Edinburgh College of Art, this statement was to become the starting point for the author's postgraduate research into place and place attachment. Despite this body of work being firmly rooted within the field of environmental psychology, its direction was first shaped by phenomenological texts. Relph (1976, cited in Bonnes, Lee & Bonaiuto, 2003, p.146) observes ‘[a]ttachment to place [to be] a fundamental human need, a need that contemporary society is increasingly unable to satisfy’; further whetting the author's appetite, Pallasmaa (2005) attributes this environmental condition and the resultant sense of detachment from place to a widespread neglect of all senses other than sight. Questions began to arise. What lay at the root of this architectural visual bias? Was a recovery from this sense of detachment from place possible? And if so - how might it be achieved?

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<sup>1</sup> As defined by the psychologist Abraham Maslow in his Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1999, pp.168-170).

## Introduction and Overview

‘The task, then, was to rediscover the true path of architecture, to unearth forms suited to the needs and aspirations of modern industrial societies, and to create images capable of embodying the ideals of a supposedly distinct ‘modern age’’. (Curtis, 2002, p.11)

Despite striving for progress and ‘human betterment’ (Curtis, 2002, p.11-12), the ideals and lasting legacy of modernism are widely regarded to have made a significant contribution to the sense of detachment from place that is currently felt throughout the Western world. As our contemporary, globalized condition indicates, many architects struggle in the successful creation of place, with the perception and approach of many appearing tainted or blinkered by the ‘mental sets [...] that unavoidably condition [them] as [they] go about their work’ (Frampton, 1974, p.443). All too often concerned with ego and economic growth, the resulting architecture is abstracted both from the realities of life and from human psychological need, discouraging rather than promoting attachment. Coupled with a fixation on the new and unprecedented, the visual bias that Pallasmaa speaks of lends itself to the production of buildings and environments that are devoid of a ‘sympathetic invitation’ through which the relationship between people and place could begin to be built (Sennett, 2006, p.109). Furthermore, advances in technology and the absence of the haptic touch in much of today’s architectural practice have placed a distance between the architect and the realities of site and context, allowing the creation of architecture which instead exists as an insincere and abstracted projection of the architect’s ideas (Pallasmaa, 2005).

In its criticism of post-modern responses, critical regionalism appears, at least theoretically, to offer something of a balanced recovery from our contemporary condition. Widely associated with this approach, Kenneth Frampton (1983a, 1983b, 1987) has produced several revisions of a ‘speculative manifesto’ which encourages ‘a contemporary architecture of resistance’ (1987, p.385) capable of creating a sense of place through its interstitial stance between global and local contexts and influences. With an emphasis on acknowledging the local (in terms of site, history, materiality,

craft and construction) critical regionalism advocates an architecture that is 'spatial and experiential, rather than image oriented' (Nesbitt, 1996, p.468).

Despite its intentions and theoretical promise with regard to the creation of place, critical regionalism has itself been widely criticized; an externally enforced polemic manifesto (Waismann, 1994), it promotes a confrontational, contradictory and self-referential architecture that (through its superficial treatment of context and place) often lacks cultural relevance (Camizaro, 2006; Cassidy, 2000; Eggener, 2002). Furthermore, Frampton, despite his prominent role in the development of this approach, has failed to demonstrate how his manifesto - which appears to be based on projection and assumption with regard to existing buildings - could be applied or interpreted within architectural design and construction (Cassidy, 2000; Eggener, 2002). Although at first appearing to offer something of a remedy, critical regionalism seems destined to fail in the creation of honest and culturally relevant environments conducive to encouraging a sense of attachment to place (Camizaro, 2006). The purpose of this thesis, therefore, is to suggest and explore an appropriate strategy for architectural practice that offers a recovery from the sense of detachment from place that remains evident throughout the Western world.

As the preface indicates, this research is grounded in environmental psychology, within which the perception and impact of places significant to a person or group of people continues to be an increasingly popular topic (Hernández, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace & Hess, 2007). First emerging in the 1950s, environmental psychology was born as a response to several factors both inside and outside the field of social sciences; of these influences, the most significant were the widespread 'contemporary societal problems' resulting from both the impact of modernism and the aftermath of the Second World War (Bonnes & Secchiaroli, 1995; Stokols, 1995, p.823).

A key characteristic of environmental psychology is its interdisciplinary nature and the subsequent dialogue it invites from fields such as architecture.

Despite the obvious commonality of interests between these disciplines, however, a great deal of tension is present between the two, stemming from fundamental distinctions not only in methodology and approach, but in their differing focus regarding the relationship between person and place. Lawson (2005, p.86) observes:

‘the psychologists and sociologists have gone on researching and the designers designing, and they are yet to re-educate each other into more genuinely collaborative roles’.

Whereas those who have been architecturally trained tend to be most concerned with the physical qualities and features of the built environment, social scientists (such as environmental psychologists) tend to approach physical settings as nothing more than containers for behavioural and social interactions (Fried, 1984; Gieryn, 2000; Gustafson, 2006); this thesis aims to encourage a closer collaboration and mutually beneficial relationship between these two fields.

Recognized as a positive ‘affective link that people establish with specific settings’ (Hernández et al., 2007, p. 310), attachment to place has been noted to occur, predictably, in settings where comfort and safety are felt. Similarly, the development of a sense of place identity (defined by Proshansky (1978, p.147) as ‘those dimensions of self that define the individual’s personal identity in relation to the physical environment’) results, in part, from experiences occurring in settings influential in the personal regulation of both self and emotion (Korpela, 1989). Such restorative experiences (whereby an individual may undergo positive transformations in directed attention capacity or mood, or be permitted the opportunity to contemplate on their character or self, etc.) are widely acknowledged to occur in places to which an individual is emotionally attached, and which may therefore influence the development of place identity (Korpela et al., 2001). The quantity of investigations into restorative environments has significantly increased in the last two decades, with a significant majority of the research employing Stephen Kaplan’s Attention Restoration Theory (1995). Observing that a

person's capability to focus their attention becomes greatly lessened by the sustained or concentrated cognitive exertion which is part of everyday life (the depletion of which often results in a significant degree of psychological exhaustion), Kaplan (1983, 1995) observes that many of the environments we encounter on a daily basis are neither supportive nor restorative, but are in fact often the opposite, often to the detriment of our well-being. Attention Restoration Theory (Kaplan, 1995) outlines a series of key traits and qualities against which a restorative environment can be measured, defined, and potentially created. When combined, the conditions and experiences encouraged by these traits have been noted to promote and sustain positive emotional changes, which in turn have been acknowledged to nurture the formation of attachment bonds between person and place.

David Canter, an eminent environmental psychologist and key contributor of leading research groups at both the University of Liverpool and the University of Strathclyde, defines place 'as a quality of a location' determined by 'the system of experience that incorporates the personal, social, and culturally significant aspects of situated activities' (Canter, 1996, p.117). Offering an interdisciplinary model of place theory (which, incidentally, has been greatly overlooked in relation to architectural design), Canter (1977) proposes that it is possible to systematically uncover and identify key constituents of place within any given context and physical setting. Drawing on the experience and conceptions of others rather than upon the often-inaccurate perceptions and projections of the architect, this approach holds great potential for aiding the creation of a genuine architectural response that encourages and supports the development of attachment bonds between people and place.

Unlike the majority of those working within the field, Canter and Kaplan are greatly concerned by the distinct lack of place-centred dialogue between environmental psychology and the field of architectural design. Despite increasing interest in the relationship between people and their environment, much of the preceding research within environmental psychology has focused upon laboratory-based experiments and findings, where responses to

significant places are analysed and collated in hindsight of construction (and appear to never be considered either before or during the process of design).

Together, this thesis and the supporting creative practice aim to investigate the translation of these key place-related theories into a replicable, non-prescriptive and non site-specific strategy for place that can be utilized in the creation of architectural design. Explored through the documentation and analysis of context-specific creative responses, this strategy, which centralizes process, will encourage further collaboration and knowledge transfer between these two fields. Promoting a haptic approach inherently capable of strengthening the relationship between person and place, the practice-based component of this research will respond to an existing architectural brief, employing a reflective methodology to explore the relationship between academic research and architectural practice.

Opening with a summary of the development of modernism and its ideals, the first chapter of this thesis will highlight the continued impact of this movement upon contemporary architectural practice within the Western world; discussing how its influence has contributed to an increasing sense of detachment from place, a series of tensions perceived to lie at the root of this disconnection will then be identified and further considered. Emphasizing the necessity for these conflicts to be addressed, this chapter will then move to discuss the ideals of critical regionalism, which developed both as an 'architectural variant' of modernism and as a reaction to subsequent post-modern responses (Camizaro, 2006, p.374); an example of how the need for a recovery from our sense of detachment from place has been both recognized and approached within the Western world, it shares with the field of environmental psychology a concern of how our sense of placelessness may be remedied through bettering the relationship between person and environment. Following a discussion of critical regionalism (and in particular the theoretical writings of Kenneth Frampton) in relation to the previously identified series of tensions, the ideals, theoretical basis and application of this approach will then be critiqued, revealing why, in this instance, it will be



disregarded as a potential remedy to our sense of detachment to place.

The second chapter will place this body of work within the theoretical context of environmental psychology, beginning with a brief summary of the history of the field and its key characteristics. Proceeding to highlight the critical methodological differences between environmental psychology and phenomenology in terms of their approach to place, the first section of this chapter will close by outlining the work of the David Canter, with particular reference to his 1977 text *The Psychology of Place*. The second section will comprise a review of the many research findings addressing the topic of place; after considering its development as a research interest within the field, a significant deficit in this area will be identified, before the definition of place and its related constructs are outlined, and their relationships discussed. Finally, Kaplan's 1995 Attention Restoration Theory and its subsequent findings will be introduced, further highlighting the correlation between the physical environment and a sense of attachment to place.

The third chapter outlines the aims, creative strategy and methodology of this research, and begins by discussing its objectives. Following this will come a review of relevant work by both Canter and Kaplan, revealing the proposed roles of these two theories within the author's strategy for place. Also discussed will be the author's supposition that as people often assign meaning and develop attachments to places which are considered to be restorative environments, responses to place uncovered via Canter's model could also reveal and be linked to environmental qualities indicative of restorative experience as described by Kaplan's theory; lending potential support to both theories whilst also strengthening the author's strategy for architectural practice and design, this hypothetical new link will be explored further within the context-specific component of this thesis.

Proceeding to highlight the types of relationships identified to exist between research and design (with regard to architecture and other creative fields) and to discuss the approach selected by the author, this chapter will close

with a discourse on the process of architectural design, summarizing its evolution and the apparent impact of contemporary design methods on the relationship between person and place.

Chapter four will offer a contextual introduction to the praxis component of this research, beginning with a historical summary of the development of Lybster (in Caithness, Scotland), where the author's creative practice is rooted. Discussing the far-reaching influence of this remote community, this section will also reflect upon the writing of local author Neil M. Gunn (and in particular his texts *The Silver Darlings* and *The Atom of Delight*), drawing parallels with place-related theories before revealing the role of his work within this body of research. Offering an introduction to North Lands Creative Glass, this chapter will close by discussing the development of this internationally renowned glass studio, highlighting current plans for expansion and the impact of the surrounding context on visiting artists and their work.

Documenting the development of the practice component of this research, the fifth chapter will discuss, in a loosely chronological order, the author's creative work to date. Heavily influenced by her changing relationship with Lybster and Caithness, her works in glass, mixed media and on paper will be considered in relation to the tensions previously identified to exist between people and place; these pieces will be used to illustrate how our sense of detachment could begin to be countered through an approach to architectural design which is both haptic and encouraging of an honest reconnection between the architect and realities of place.

As this thesis begins to draw to a close, the penultimate chapter will illustrate the potential interpretation and application of the theoretical propositions underpinning the author's strategy, continuing to use the context-specific elements of this body of work as an example. The theories of Canter (1977) and Kaplan (1995) will be explored in relation to the architectural brief offered by North Lands Creative Glass, illustrating their potential to aid the

understanding and identification of key place-defining characteristics. Following this, the author will again reflect on the writings of Neil M. Gunn, considering the application of his metaphorical reflections as potential alternative approaches to design. Drawing on insight and experience gained by the author during the course of her research, this chapter will close with a brief discussion on sources of narrative and their ability to inform a sense of place and attachment.

The final chapter will open with a review and critique of current place-related policy initiatives and guidance, highlighting how the architectural profession appears to be perpetuating our sense of detachment from place. Offering her developing strategy as a potential alternative approach, the author will then deliver an overview of a series of propositions drawn from key theoretical findings of environmental psychology and the outcomes of personal explorations; together, these replicable, generalized and non-prescriptive propositions contain the potential to challenge typical methods of everyday architectural practice whilst offering a recovery from the previously identified tensions between people and place.

This thesis will close with a critical reflection on both the limitations and achievements of the author's research, summarizing its potential value and contribution to the discipline before closing with a discussion of potential opportunities for application and development.

## 1 Detachment from Place: In Search of a Recovery

*In our current climate with its largely commercial, globalized emphasis, many architects exhibit great difficulty in the creation of place, with their creative process commonly dominated and conditioned by a visually-biased mentality; attributable to the long-lasting impact of modernism, what often results is an abstracted architecture unrelated to the realities and needs of human life, both providing and promoting a sense of alienation between person and place as a consequence.*

*Although not a new area of interest, the topic of meaning in architecture is often studied and discussed in relation to semiotics, which contains the potential to confine architecture to being understood and approached primarily through the sense of vision. Critical regionalism, in its criticism of post-modern responses, champions an architecture rich in spatial qualities and sensory experience; however, despite appearing to offer a method of recovery from our current architectural condition, it itself has been widely criticized as a superficial, alienating and contradictory approach.*

*This thesis opens by highlighting the development and principles of modernism, summarizing how its legacy has led to a continued sense of disconnection from place within contemporary architecture and architectural practice. An overview of the emergence and ideals of critical regionalism will then be given, with particular reference to the texts of Kenneth Frampton, with whom this theoretical approach is most often associated. The two will then be comparatively discussed in relation to a series of tensions identified by the author to exist between people and place, before a critique of critical regionalism reveals why, in this instance, it is to be discounted as a remedy to our sense of detachment from place.*

## 1.1 *Modernism*

‘There is a tidy and misleading analogy between history and human life which proposes that architectural movements are born, have youth, mature, and eventually die. The historical process which led to the creation of the modern movement in architecture had none of this biological inevitability, and had no clear beginning which can be pinpointed with precision’. (Curtis, 1996, p.21)

As Curtis suggests, there is little agreement on the origins of modernism in architecture; regarded by some as ‘an essentially twentieth century condition’ (Leach, 1997, p.3), for others its beginnings are attributed to one of many differing factors spanning in excess of a century. Whilst defining or analysing the origin of modernism is not within the scope of this research, the probable roots of its ideals must be highlighted before its lasting impact on the field of contemporary architecture (and in particular on our sense of place) can be discussed. Its legacy indicates that although there has been a decline in the popularity of this movement, it has seen no end, just as there seems to have been no discernible beginning (Curtis, 1996).

The eighteenth century saw both a strengthening in empiricist thought and the emergence of history and archaeology as fields of study<sup>2</sup>, leading to the Renaissance tradition of referring solely to Antiquity seeming indefensible and somewhat unacceptable. With the declining belief in its ideals and traditions the Renaissance faltered, allowing a void to emerge and be filled with eclectic, false and inaccurate representations of historic architectural forms (Frampton, 2007; Fleming, Honour & Pevsner, 1999). Originating partly as a response to these seemingly disordered and tumultuous revivals of form, a main tenet of modern architecture was that a style true to that particular age should be conveyed. Architectural history was understood to have progressed through varying and distinctive periods, each of which had a particular architectural essence, style, and often technique related to the realities and conditions of culture at that time - revivals, with their inauthentic expressions, were considered flawed and insufficient (Curtis,

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<sup>2</sup> Whilst the former ‘undermined the idealistic structure of Renaissance aesthetics’, the latter encouraged a ‘greater discrimination of the past and a relativist view of tradition in which various periods could be seen as holding equal value’. (Curtis, 1996, p.21)

1996; Fleming, Honour & Pevsner, 1999). What resulted, however, was the dismissal not only of the role of memory and the importance of history, but of their significance in the relationship between person and place, which was by then considered by many to be no more than romantic nostalgia. The body and its emotional and existential needs were cast aside in favour of a functionalist approach, abstracted from the realities of life, and which eschewed the need for meaning in architecture (Bloomer & Moore, 1977).

Further answering the call for progress, the Industrial Revolution brought with it radical advances in technology and mechanisation, and, subsequently, new and alternative approaches to architectural construction and form. In the Western world – particularly in Great Britain and America, where ‘mechanical experiment for industrial development’ (Sennett, 2008, p.106) was swiftly advocated by the respective national governments – it became apparent that machinery was soon to replace skilled craftsmen and labourers; capable of large-scale production at a lower cost and greater speed, the machine was a substitute for human judgement, touch and skill. As Sennett (2008, p.109) notes, it was then that ‘[f]or the first time, the sheer quantity of uniform objects aroused concerns that number would dull the senses, [that] the uniform perfection of machined goods [would issue] no sympathetic invitation, no personal response’.

The developments and achievements of the Industrial Revolution transformed both urban and rural areas. Supported by the industrial output of the neighbouring countryside, cities underwent a metamorphosis, with advances in methods of transportation and communication altering perceptions of both the notion of place as a concept and of the relationship between space and time. As Entrikin (1991, p.1) notes, with this metamorphosis came an increased awareness of ‘the fundamental polarity of human consciousness between a relatively subjective and a relatively objective point of view’, which plays a significant role in ‘the perceived crisis of modernity’. Propelled and supported by the growth of modernism, such decentralization of approach and connection to the world led to a loss of

meaning in both action and environment (Nagel, 1956).

The development of technology and the subsequent rise in new materials (the various stages of which were now able to be executed in isolation, often over considerable distances) played a significant role in the emergence of a divide between architecture and engineering; the latter, fuelled by rapid scientific advances, was widely regarded to be pioneering and better suited to the cultural needs and ideals at that time, and was, as such, greatly favoured. As a consequence, a division appeared between the mind, hand and eye, which in turn made a significant contribution to the production of homogeneous, utilitarian buildings and objects devoid of character and meaning (Pallasmaa, 2009).

The negative impact of modernism has been long-lasting and far-reaching, remaining evident within much of today's architectural thinking and design; emerging in response to her reading on this topic, the author has identified four long-standing tensions that continue to make a significant contribution to the sense of detachment to place that exists throughout the Western world. With roots in contemporary architectural practice and design, these tensions reflect our professional detachment from: history and locality; materiality and the construction of meaningful form; the body and the senses; and methods of representation and communication. Following an overview of critical regionalism, these tensions will provide headings under which these two architectural approaches will then be discussed and compared.

## **1.2 Critical Regionalism**

First developed by Alex Tzonis and Liliane Lefaivre, critical regionalism emerged as a response to the postmodern attitudes exhibited by regionalism (and its subsequent development into populism). It sought, as an 'architectural variant' of modernism (Camizaro, 2006, p.374), 'to combine a response to the local with a certain universality, avoiding the vernacular,

sentimental or picturesque while affirming the importance of environmental, cultural and societal values' (Fleming, Honour & Pevsner, 1999, p.134). Advocating the employment of architectural features recognized to be local or unique, and demonstrating an opposition toward those considered to be conceptually abstract or universal, regionalism also displayed considerable signs of ambiguity, and had been linked with not only liberation and reform, but chauvinism and repression (Foster, 1983; Tzonis & Lefaivre, 1981). Critical regionalism was more accepting of modernist ideals, however, and recognised that the increasingly globalised nature of our culture should not be ignored or overlooked, aiming, in response, to strike a balance between these two stances (Tzonis & Lefaivre, 1981). Although coined by Tzonis and Lefaivre, critical regionalism is most commonly associated with the architectural historian and theorist Kenneth Frampton, who (having written widely on the subject) has given the term a slightly different emphasis (Nesbitt, 1996); Frampton considered it crucial that this approach should draw *directly* from the context of the place in question, unlike Tzonis and Lefaivre who suggested that *indirect* contextual references would suffice (Frampton, 1987). In line with Heidegger's assertion regarding a sense of placelessness and the accompanying loss of nearness in the modern world, he felt that globalization and the growth in cultural universality had created a void between people and place; in order to counteract this global placelessness and to reinstate meaning into the built environment, he contended that it was an architect's duty to generate place, with a particular emphasis on buildings of a more intimate scale that responded to their context and locality (Heidegger, 1971; Frampton, 2006).

Summarizing Frampton's explanation of critical regionalism, Camizaro (2006, p.19) notes:

'it is defined by a culture's unique identity, manner of place-making, architectonic strategies, qualities of the environment in dialogue with local means for coping with that environment, and possible tactile experiences that may enrich one's being there'.

Frampton's approach to critical regionalism draws upon critical theory



(defined by the Frankfurt School as a social theory focused upon the appraisal and subsequent amendment of society in its entirety) and phenomenological inquiry into 'the specificity of place', both of which offer a critique of the scientific rationale of positivism (Nesbitt, 1996, p.468). Forming a key paradigm in postmodern architecture, phenomenology allowed 'the bodily and unconscious connection to architecture' (Nesbitt, 1996, p.29) to be studied in relation to the detrimental effect of modernism's technological advances. The critical differences between phenomenological and scientific approaches will be discussed further in the following chapter.

Aligning himself with neither Neo-Avant-Gardism nor Neo-Historicism<sup>3</sup>, Frampton advocated that maintaining an interstitial stance between the two should be a central objective of critical regionalism, believing it to be the only way architecture could progress. From this middle ground he sought to lay the foundations for 'a contemporary architecture of resistance' (Frampton, 1987, p.385), which, in choosing to not conform to universal styles or trends, promoted sense of place through both responding to the local and remaining receptive to the global. However, in compromising between these two polemic positions, a paradox emerged; Frampton (1987, p.377) asks: '[h]ow may we reground the practice of our admittedly marginal discipline without blindly reiterating a modern syntax, deprived of its original subversive and poetic energy, or without lapsing into an endless proliferation of kitsch historicism devoid of all relevance and sense?'. In response to this (and in an attempt to define the scope of critical regionalism as an approach), Frampton suggests a series of points that comprise a 'speculative manifesto'<sup>4</sup> (1987, p.378) for the creation of successful architectural responses. Neither prescriptive nor 'a singular strategy' (Nesbitt, 1996, p.468), these points,

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<sup>3</sup> Frampton saw the staunch supporters and leaders of the post-modern movement to be belonging to one of two groups: Neo-Avant-Gardists, who upheld the continual growth of modernism but yet appeared to reject the notion of 'global utopias'; and Neo-Historicists, who appeared to abandon the ideals of modernism in favour of retreating to architectural tradition. Of the two, he felt that the former, although of 'predominantly technical character' (Frampton, 1987, p.385), was perhaps more realistic, in that cultural progression remained as a recognised ideal, with the latter being greatly regressive.

<sup>4</sup> *Ten Points on an Architecture of Regionalism: A Provisional Polemic*, which represented 'the fullest development of [Frampton's] ideas' (Camizaro, 2006, p.374)

many of which are grouped together in opposing, dialectical pairs (such as space/place and artificial/natural), will subsequently be highlighted and discussed at relevant intervals in this chapter, under the four headings previously identified, allowing the aims of critical regionalism to be discussed in comparison to the tensions between people and place that were created by modernism.

### **1.3 *Detachment from: History and Locality***

In denying history in favour of progress, modernism unknowingly encouraged a widespread sense of detachment between people and place. With reference to history considered unnecessarily sentimental and nostalgic, the importance of memory in the creation of relationships between people and places was, in essence, disregarded (Bloomer & Moore, 1997). In criticism of this, Aldo Van Eyck (1967, cited in Frampton, 2007, p.298) observes:

‘the past, present and future must be active in the mind’s interior as a continuum. If they are not, the artefacts we make will be without temporal depth or associative perspective... [...] It is obvious that the full scope of this enormous environmental experience cannot be combined unless we telescope the past...Architects nowadays are pathologically addicted to change, regarding it as something one either hinders, runs after, or as best keeps up with. This, I suggest, is why they tend to sever the past from the future, with the result that the present is rendered emotionally inaccessible, without temporal dimension’.

Despite the influence of such post-modern scholars, many contemporary architectural practices in the Western world still fail to acknowledge that their buildings are both ‘part of a general cultural production and a part of history’ (Caruso, 2008, p.12). Preferring to follow in the corporate footsteps of their clients, many are engaging in egotistical battles on a global scale, resulting in the creation of an architecture that (with an overriding focus on economic growth) is largely ‘siteless’ (Caruso, 2008, p.12). Devoid of character, connections to context and genuine concern for its occupants, the intentions communicated by such architecture appear to have little or

nothing to do with the pleasure of experience and responding to history or culture.

Given the prominence of globalization and increase in mobility, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the human desire for a sense of place may have been somewhat lessened (Lewicka, in press). But, as Casey notes, 'certain devastating phenomena of this century bring with them, by aftershock as it were, a revitalized sensitivity to place' (1997, p.xiii); as Entrikin (1991, p.1) notes, our awareness of the increasing polarity between 'a relatively subjective and a relatively objective point of view [...] does not diminish the role of place as a basic condition of experience'. Despite this, within the built environment, there is an increasingly dominant sense of placelessness (Entrikin, 1991), which Relph (1976, p. 143) defines as

'both an environment without significant places and the underlying attitude which does not acknowledge significance in places. It reaches back into the deepest levels of place, cutting roots, eroding symbols, replacing diversity with uniformity and experiential order with conceptual order'.

Acknowledging the current emphasis on those architectural responses with a global rather than local focus, Franck and Lepori (2007, p.28) suggest that this historical and cultural disconnection begins for many in architectural education:

'students are encouraged to forsake the values of their own culture in order to adopt those of the transnational culture of architecture, which is largely Western with its allegiance to the objectified model of knowledge and principles of design that are expected to be universal in their application'.

Considering how this educational approach is then capable of manifesting itself within the profession, Mazumdar (1993, p.235) observes that discouraging local cultural and historical connections devalues the personal experiences of both the architect and their potential clients within the wider community. The objective architect finds it increasingly difficult to understand and relate to the subjective needs of the people they are designing for; the resulting architecture, out of touch with reality and

context, instead exists as merely an impersonal projection by the designer, largely unresponsive to the true requirements of the occupants (Frank & Lepori, 2007). As a result, there is now an urgent need for localised and site-specific architecture that responds to both the physical setting and the particular needs of the occupants (Caruso, 2008, p.27).

Our present day fixation with new, statement-making forms ‘is detaching architecture from its mental and experiential ground and turning it into a production of fabricated visual imagery’ (Pallasmaa, 2011, p.137). Whilst such buildings might appear *visually* intriguing, the lack of consideration given to their relationship with their occupants (along with a lack of engagement in context) often results in the provision of spaces which are unremarkable and unlikely to offer significant existential experiences and the opportunity for the formation of attachments to place. As we have read, the construction of such unprecedented and unfamiliar forms from scaleless and characterless machine-produced materials denies both historical reference and the opportunity for ‘sympathetic invitation’ or ‘personal response’ (Sennett, 2006, p.109) through which people build an identification with and attachment to place.

Offered as a counterbalance to what has ultimately become an unintentionally alienating attitude towards architecture, critical regionalism emphasizes the cultural importance of the specificities of place. Suggesting that our endless global consumerism and placeless, ‘siteless’ architecture (Caruso, 2008, p.12; Frampton, 1987) can be actively confronted through the creation of localized enclaves whilst remaining equally receptive to global influences, Frampton proposes an approach which he views as capable of contributing to the creation of place and, therefore (one would assume), attachment (Nesbitt, 1996, p.469).

Adopting an attitude to historical referencing which lies between the postmodern approach of casual appropriation and modernism’s strategy of dismissal, nostalgic associations with the vernacular are avoided; promoting

defamiliarization (which will be explained in due course) critical regionalism seeks to unsentimentally utilize recomposed and interpreted references, both vernacular and foreign, 'as disjunctive episodes within the whole' (Frampton, 2007, p.327). Importantly, critical regionalism does not promote a designated or identifiable style or 'visual hegemony', but is instead conceptually motivated both by the potential within its unique, localised enclave and by external cultural influences in the process of transforming space into place (Alfonsin, 2005, p.372; Nesbitt, 1996).

The first dialectic pairing in Frampton's 1987 provisional polemic, space/place, draws directly upon Heidegger's *Building Dwelling Thinking* (1971), with the former defined as being hypothetically infinite and divided at frequent intervals, and the latter as an irregular and much less predictable boundary (due to being defined by a phenomenological aspect). In contrast to modern architecture's perceived predilection towards the rapid production of 'universal, privatized, placeless domain[s]' (Frampton, 1987, p.382), critical regionalism emerged as a site-specific approach; considering the emphasis bestowed upon a particular area (determined through the construction of a building on the site in question), and with sympathetic connection to context of the utmost importance, buildings were to no longer to be conceived and portrayed independently. Just as Van Eyck urged that we should strive for 'unconditional identification and equality between maker and user' (Ligtelijn, 1999, p.8), critical regionalism 'is an art of building that does not create an artistic elite or designer caste', discouraging the architectural ego and the detachment from the reality that can result. '[T]he artist', as Alfonsin (2005, p.372) suggests, 'remains one of us'.

Regardless of theoretical approach or style, each new work of architecture cannot avoid placing itself within the terrain of the given site and altering its pre-existing physical context (Frampton, 1987). Heavily related to this is the second oppositional pairing of topography and typology, inferring site specificity and a universal, non site-specific architectural type or symbol respectively. Frampton (1983) proposes that through the considerate

‘inlaying’ of built form into the site, it is possible for particular cultural references (in particular those pertaining to archaeology, agriculture or geology) to become imprinted, recorded and incorporated into the process and form of the resulting architecture. He intends that through acknowledging both historical attributes (such as pre-historic or archaeological roots) and changes in use and form over time, some of the key characteristics of a place would be revealed and communicated to the occupants.

Contrasting greatly to the modern movement’s approach to site, such interactions with and responses to a given locality and its significant qualities are of the utmost importance to critical regionalism. As Nesbitt (1996, p.468) notes, the development of a sense of place (and ultimately attachment) is encouraged through the creation of architecture that ‘evokes the oneiric essence of the site, together with the inescapable materiality of building’ (Frampton, 1983, p.474). Fundamental to architecture, typology and typography form the basis of the ‘alternative authentic architecture’ offered to us by critical regionalism (Nesbitt, 1996, 468).

#### **1.4    *Detachment from: Materiality and the Construction of Meaningful Form***

Largely obsessed with unprecedented and complex forms, the practice of contemporary architecture all too often overlooks the opportunity to connect with the emotive and sensory potential of the realities of context, further highlighting an apparent lack of material sensibility (Caruso, 2008). The ‘flatness’ of our present-day construction (and our predilection for ‘the machine-made materials of today [which] deliberately aim at ageless perfection’ (Pallasmaa, 2005, pp.31-32)) is of notable contrast to natural and more traditional building materials such as wood and stone, which carry with them a perceivably truthful expression of their history, age and previous use; such material expressions are telling of a ‘workshop of long experience and

incessant practice' (Heidegger, 1971, p.161), revealing not only an evocative record of previous occupants of a building, but also the intent and understanding of the builder or craftsman regarding its use and construction (Sharr, 2007; Gooding, Putnam & Smith, 1997). To this end, as Sharr (2007, p.70) notes, 'buildings are memorials to the engagements of mind with place, [not only] involved in their construction and alteration over time', but capable of sharing and inviting associative meaning.

Sennett observes the phenomenon of 'material consciousness' as something which all craftsmen possess – their 'proper conscious domain' (2008, p. 119-120), through which, following their curiosity, instinct and thought, they are driven to alter and explore the possibilities of a material. Traditionally, architecture and craft were considered to be closely related; prior to the Renaissance (when drawings began to surface as a tool in architectural conception), the exploration of thoughts and concepts was carried out via a direct dialogue with the realities of the site. With the growth in modernism's popularity in the post-war period came an increasing separation between the physical site of construction and the architect, resulting in a lessened influence and presence of craft in architectural design. In contemporary practice this separation has become increasingly distinct, with architects tending to work almost exclusively from their offices in the production of computer drawings and the issue of verbal instruction, rarely pausing to truly connect to the materiality or the physicality of construction as a consequence. In turn, this detachment between architecture and construction 'proclaim[s] that materiality is unimportant; that architecture [...] is best when it attempts to transcend both bodies and matter' (Franck & Lepori, 2007, p.27). What inevitably results are environments devoid of a sense of material quality, human life and meaningful intent, incapable of fostering personal identification with or a sense of attachment to place (Lawson, 2006).

Given that much of today's architecture fails to address and respond to its physical, cultural and social surroundings, it is perhaps of little surprise to read that it has been suggested that architects appear to have largely

forgotten the very definition of the term ‘environment’<sup>5</sup>. No longer concerning the conditions that envelope the occupant and ‘relate the outer membrane of a given fabric to a particular place and a specific culture’ (Frampton, 1987, p.383), instead it has become focussed on mechanical services which further serve to isolate the users of the building from both their surroundings and the sensory potential contained within. Within the field of architecture it is now most commonly used in reference to issues such as embodied energy or heat loss calculations, and whilst the importance of such issues should not be overlooked, they do not reflect the true breadth of the meaning of the term.

In response to this standardization of construction and the mechanical mass-production of materials, critical regionalism advocates an enhanced material sensibility in the creation of a stimulating variety of existential and sensory experiences. Through employing a contextual and site-specific response in addition to the use of local craftsmanship, materials and methods of construction, it encourages ‘[the return of] a sense of reality to the meaning of architectural form’ (Camizaro, 2006, p.374). The tendency for the majority of today’s built environment to reduce experience to a visual image is central to Frampton’s dialectic pairing of the architectonic and the scenographic. Here, the architectonic refers to the tactile, physical qualities of the structure and ‘the way in which the artifice interacts with nature, not only in terms of gravity, but also in terms of its durability with regard to the agencies of climate and time’ (Frampton, 1987, p.383). In contrast, the scenographic describes the perceived representational qualities of the scene, which are purely visual in nature.

Continually dialectic, critical regionalism ‘[exalts] the craft of building’ (Camizaro 2006, p.32-33) through not only advocating use of local building materials and methods, but also through promoting a more considered

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<sup>5</sup> ‘1:[T]he surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant lives and operates  
2:[T]he natural world, as a whole or in a particular geographical area, especially as affected by human activity’ (Pearsall, 1998, p.617)



approach to the use of the machine in manufacturing materials. It is suggested that appropriate and balanced use of these two approaches would lead to 'new levels of synthesis', and 'a total vision of design, [...] whilst at the same time embracing an optimistic belief in the potentialities of technology' (Alfosin, 2005, p.372). The architectural alternatives, arising out of such unification, highlight the manner in which built form can appeal to senses other than vision. As noted by Frampton in his discussion of the visual and the tactile (a further dialectic pairing): '[a]rchitecture possesses a marked capacity for being experienced by the entire sensorium; that is to say, senses other than the optic nerve are involved in experiencing architecture' (1987 in Camizaro, p.384). As a rule, surface finishes and material qualities (particularly in terms of their impact on the internal condition of spaces) contain just as much potential to affect our perception of architecture as the visual statement provided by architectural form (Frampton, 2007).

In failing to consider the true breadth of the term *environment*, Frampton suggests that we are dismissing attributes which relate not only the exterior of a building (often treated merely as an 'aesthetic skin' (1987, p.376)) to its specific local culture, but which also encourage a strengthened relationship between internal and external environments. Discussing his dialectic pairing of artificial and natural, he notes that

'[m]ore than any other art form, building and architecture have an interactive relationship with nature. Nature is not only topography and site, but also climate and light to which architecture is ultimately responsive to a far greater degree than any other art. Built form is necessarily susceptible to an intense interaction with these elements and with time, in its cyclical aspects'. (1987, p.383)

Our inconsiderate overuse of mechanical applications (such as air-conditioning) has led to the creation of a universal architecture which is capable of being exported all over the world. Critical regionalism, on the other hand, proposes that architecture which is more considerate in its response to local building traditions is likely to be both 'more ecologically sound' and divergent in its features (Nesbitt, 1996).

Despite his view that regions ‘serve as a resistant medium’ to the widespread homogeneity of our built environment, Frampton does not support a return to either vernacular or modern architecture (1987, p.374). With its concern for self-reflection, critical regionalism promotes the adoption and adaptation of regional ‘place-defining’ elements in order to potentially support ‘human contact and community’ (Tzonis & Lefaivre, 1990, p.489). Rather than directly referencing such elements (which could be interpreted as reiterations of the nostalgic vernacular), Frampton proposes instead that they are incorporated in a much less familiar manner, making them appear indistinct (Frampton, 1983). The purpose of this process - defamiliarization<sup>6</sup> - is to impede the nostalgic relationship between people and their built environment, eliciting ‘an imagined dialogue [between] the viewer [and their architectural surroundings]’ through the ‘pricking of the conscious’ and the process of ‘de-automizing perception’ (Tzonis & Lefaivre, 1990, p.489, citing Schlovsky, n.d.). Attempting to strike a balance between the sentimental vernacular and our longstanding obsession with the new, critical regionalism interprets and applies features of historical and cultural relevance in new and unfamiliar ways, in an effort to avoid the pitfalls of either approach.

### **1.5 Detachment from: *The Body and the Senses***

As a form of nature, within classical architecture the body was considered to be representative of the natural world’s innate ability to arrange ‘complex functions’ (Nesbitt, 1996, p.63) sensitively and harmoniously (Vidler, 1992), with both its form and proportion referred to in the scale and organization of architecture and its elements. In contrast, its ‘exclusion [...] from all discourse on the logic of form’ is acknowledged by many to be typical of the reductive, functional approach of modern architecture (Tschumi, 1981, p.166). The impact and growth of globalization led to the functional needs of

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<sup>6</sup> Originally applied to literature (following its development by the literary theoretician Victor Schlovsky), this conceptual method is equally relatable to architecture (Tzonis & Lefaivre, 1986), but with regard to regionalism it can be only be applied to through a critical approach (and so is not befitting to other variants of architectural regionalist theory).

the body tending to be considered universally, in an almost mechanical fashion, with homogenized assumptions of motion and size that were devoid of consideration for emotional or sensory needs (Schribner, 1997). The body has come to be viewed objectively, from the outside, placing sensory emphasis on the vision of the designer who, in often being visually biased, has become removed from the physiological needs and experience of the occupants (Franck & Lepori, 2007, p.25).

This loss of connection to the body brings with it an additional loss of architectural presence and a disconnection from reality. As was discussed earlier, with so many of the processes of construction disguised by machine-made regularity, buildings often become confined to visual experiences. The human touch in both design and construction is missing; architecture, as a result, becomes a 'stage set for the eye' (Pallasmaa, 2005, p.31). This visual prejudice has emerged not just within the field of architecture, but within contemporary culture as a whole; the use of our senses has become unbalanced, and this, coupled with a disregard for the human body and its inherent sensory perception, has contributed greatly to the often unsympathetic and inhuman character of much of today's built environment. The Western world has demonstrated a visual bias since the time of the ancient Greeks, who - despite their 'vision-generated, vision-centred interpretation of knowledge, truth, and reality' (Levin, 1993, p.2) - remained considerate of other senses, believing them to exist in a hierarchy related to the concept of the cosmic body, descending from vision to touch (Pack, 1994). In comparison, with modernism's dismissal of historical (and therefore humanist) referencing came a disregard of all senses other than vision, a prejudice that was to later contribute to the widespread sense of displacement between person and place (Eisenman, 1976).

As the driving force behind the constant stream and mass production of images that we are presented with on a daily basis, Heidegger considers the dominance of vision within our culture to be '[t]he fundamental event of the modern age' (1977b, p. 134). Perpetuated by the lasting presence and

influence of modernist ideals, this ocular bias and endless flow of images have also had a marked effect on the methods of representation and communication utilised by architects, as will be discussed in greater depth at a later stage in this chapter. There is little doubt that the mass-production of images and the advancement of visual technology significantly stifles and isolates our remaining senses; the result of this, as Harvey (1992) observes, is not only growth in distance from our ability to emote, relate and respond to the world around us, but a significant sense of detachment and alienation between our physical surroundings and our bodies as a whole. In comparison to the narcissistic eye, which '[views] architecture solely as a means of self-expression [...] detached from essential mental and societal connections', the nihilistic eye purposely progresses 'sensory and mental detachment and alienation' (Pallasmaa, 2005, p.22). Discouraging the body from experiencing, influencing or responding to its surroundings, nihilistic architecture also promotes the idea that life is meaningless. Heidegger (1977b) concedes that although the initial dominance of vision produced an exciting new architectural expression, it has now grown – alarmingly - to be increasingly nihilistic.<sup>7</sup>

Given the increased ocular bias and obsession with the image within the field of architecture over the last forty years, Pallasmaa (2005, p.25-26) suggests that 'the task of art and architecture in general is [now] to reconstruct the experience of an undifferentiated interior world' – a world in which we are not confined to visual understanding, but are instead offered a complete and sincere existential experience through which we can reconnect with our surroundings and sense of self. As Fredric Jameson notes, our cultural situation is one that greatly lacks in depth, due to 'its fixation with appearances, surfaces and instant impacts that have no sustaining power over time' (cited in Harvey, 1992, p.58).

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<sup>7</sup> Of all the senses, it is only vision that is capable of having such a trait; as Pallasmaa (2005, p.22) notes, 'it is impossible to think of a nihilistic sense of touch, for instance, because of the unavoidable nearness, intimacy, veracity and identification that the sense of touch carries'.

In his dialectic pairing of visual/tactile, Frampton (1987) responds by proposing that our fascination with the creation of visual form should be balanced with the considered application of tactile materials and surface finishes. In contrast with the visual statement of form, such opportunities for tactile<sup>8</sup> encounters (such as the nature of audible sounds, the pitch and rhythm of a staircase, or an appropriate degree of warmth) possess the ability to profoundly impact upon our perception, and are inherently more likely to strengthen the impact of our experience, increasing the potential for the formation of lasting memories and attachment as a result (Bloomer & Moore, 1977).

Just as modernism saw ‘the loss of the body as an authoritative foundation for architecture’ (Vidler, 1992, p.70), critical regionalism supports its return; ‘[a]bove all’, Frampton (1987, p.385) states, ‘[critical regionalism] is a concept of the environment where the body as a whole is seen as being essential to the manner in which [the environment] is experienced’. In upholding consideration of the local - particularly in terms of site and construction, it cultivates not only the ‘regrounding’ of architecture (Nesbitt, 1996, p.468) but also, as a consequence (one would hope), of architects. Unlike the purely visual, externalized stance towards the body which developed as a response to modernism (Franck & Lepori, 2007; Schribner, 1997), critical regionalism offers the architect the opportunity to fully engage with the entire human sensorium and the actuality of being through returning to ‘the poetics of construction’ (Nesbitt, 1996, p. 516). Through further developing the rapport and equilibrium between user and maker, as Tzonis and Lefaivre (1990, p.490) observe, ‘[i]t seems that [...] we are coming closer to a more balanced outlook, closer to reality’.

By addressing the sensory imbalance caused by modernism, critical regionalism seeks to eradicate the often unsympathetic character of

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<sup>8</sup> Tactility (as discussed in this context) refers to all of the senses – all are considered to be ‘specialisations of skin tissue’ (Pallasmaa, 2005, p.11), and as a result can all be considered as ways of touching.

contemporary architecture which often fails to stimulate the body or encourage attachment with its surroundings (Pallasmaa, 2005). The dominant nihilism of vision (Heidegger, 1977b) is replaced by both a concern for tactile experience (which, due to its nature, is unable be nihilistic) and the reinstatement of meaning into architecture. As Frampton (1983b, p.29) notes, in opposition to ‘the scenographic and the drawing of veils over the surface of reality [...] the tectonic and the tactile jointly have the capacity to transcend the mere appearance of the technical in much the same way as the place-form has the potential to withstand the relentless onslaught of global modernization.’

### **1.6 Detachment from: Methods of Representation and Communication**

Today, buildings of all types are more often than not projected in published images as independent objects, reflecting the priorities of the detached, visually biased designer and suggesting that human life is secondary to the form and appearance of the architecture. In many ways it seems we are, as Sontag (1986, p.7) suggests, being pushed to possess a ‘mentality which looks at the world as a set of potential photographs’.

One of the oldest and most enduring methods of representation and communication in architecture, the nature of the architectural model has changed significantly over recent decades<sup>9</sup>. Although some continue to be crafted in relatively low-tech workshops, the construction and fabrication of

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<sup>9</sup> In comparison to drawing, the importance and value of traditional model making in the field of architecture has been greatly overlooked. Whilst there are a handful of publications to be found which discuss its physical and technical practicalities and techniques, there is a distinct lack of literature which addresses the development and necessity of model making within the architectural profession; *The Thinking Hand: Existential and Embodied Wisdom in Architecture* (a book devoted to the inherent possibilities of the hand as a conduit between the mind of the artist and the images they produce (Pallasmaa, 2009)) contains only two short paragraphs which specifically discuss the architectural model. Of the remaining available literature, Moon’s (2005) *Modelling Messages: The Architect and the Model* is the only source to offer what seems a comprehensive guide to the history and evolution of the model in relation to contemporary practice, and as such will be relied upon as a primary source of reference in the following discussion on the topic.

many models (particularly those which are intended for presentation) now employ rapidly developing computerized and mechanized technologies, implying that 'the model maker, or indeed the physical model itself, is becoming obsolete' (Moon, 2005, p.185).

Sennett suggests that although during the modern movement the machine (in being able to work relentlessly and without tiring) posed a considerable physical challenge, 'the modern machine's threat to developing skill posed a different challenge' (2008, p.39), of which computer-aided design (CAD) is an example. The emergence of CAD in 1963 proved to be critical to the modern world in terms of its contribution to the mass production of precise mechanical components. Within the field of architectural design (where its application 'has become nearly universal' (Sennett, 2008, p.39)), however, in spite of their capabilities and time-efficiency, the risk of misuse of CAD and related technologies has been acknowledged as significant.

The act of designing and making by hand has now been almost completely replaced by computer drawing, removing the cyclical, reflexive and stimulating process in which architectural designers traditionally worked. Turkle (1995, p.64) observes:

'when you draw a site, when you put in the contour lines and the trees, it becomes ingrained in your mind. You come to know the site in a way that is not possible with the computer... you get to know a terrain by tracing and re-tracing it, not by letting the computer 'regenerate' it for you'.

Unlike computer drawing, in allowing the architect greater opportunity for immersion in both site and the resulting design, hand-sketches can readily become 'pictures of possibility' (Sennett, 2008, p.40) through which both thought and process can evolve and gain clarity. Over-reliance on computer drawing in this early stage of design - 'when the architectural essence of the building is conceived and determined' and when the creative and intuitive response is vital (Pallasmaa, 2009, p. 95) - poses a significant threat to both the thinking of the architect and the quality of the resulting building. The

ability of the computer to manipulate and frame objects ‘in a unified way that physical sight never is’ (p.41) further encourages a visual bias, through which a distorted, ill-considered and less accurate view of the physical reality of scale and proportion results.<sup>10</sup>

Conversely, when one draws or makes a model by hand, there is a relationship between the subject, its physical manifestation, and the mental realm of the architect or designer; it is, in essence, a haptic experience in which the architect embodies the physical object he is designing, making or drawing (Pallasmaa, 2005). Architects today, as Frank and Lepori note, are often guilty of ‘projecting their ideas upon the world, rather than discovering what is already there or could emerge’ (2007, p.21); their output is not grounded in an experiential reality. Instead our reality, as Sontag (1986, p. 16) observes, ‘has come to seem more and more what we are shown by camera’.

Discussing the response of critical regionalism to our widespread visual bias, Frampton observes that ‘[t]he tactile resilience of the place-form and the capacity of the body to read the environment in terms other than those of sight alone suggest a potential strategy for resisting the domination of universal technology’ (1983b, p. 28). Although not written with specific reference to architectural practice (but instead in broader terms relating to the built environment), this statement, comparable to the observations of

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<sup>10</sup> As an aside, it is important to note that long before the application of CAD within the field of architecture, hand-drawn perspectival representation had already begun to create and nurture an abstracted perception of space, resulting in a division between built form and the needs and existential reality of the body, the latter of which became increasingly misread (Pallasmaa, 2005). Also favouring vision over the other senses, the aspiration of perspective was ‘to attain realism through an arrested image (an image that presents the visual field under static, unnatural circumstances)’ (Ronen, 2002, p.124). Brunelleschi’s introduction of perspective (through his measured drawings of Roman architecture) was ‘of central interest to architects’ (Ronen, 2002, p.125), but in its neglect of the tactile and focus on the visual it has been described as placing ‘a screen between the eye and the object’ (Ronen, 2002, p.150). In allowing the recreation of ‘the viewer’s lack of direct access to experience’, the use of perspective purposefully depicts our field of vision as being two dimensional (Ronen, 2002, p. 136, citing Norman Bryson, 1983). As designers, our perception of space has become ‘impoverished’ (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 83) and driven by our ocular bias; in replacing the viewer’s direct experience, perspective denied all senses other than sight and encouraged a considerable degree of detachment from our existential reality as a result (Ronen, 2002).



those such as Sennett (2008) and Turkle (1995) regarding the benefits of the haptic connection in design and making, could also be interpreted in terms of the architectural design process.

Echoing Aldo Van Eyck's observations regarding the creation of 'emotionally inaccessible' architecture as a result of the widespread 'pathological [addiction] to change' (1967, cited in Frampton, 2007, p.298) within contemporary architectural practice, Frampton dismisses advances in visual technology (such as computers and televisions) as being greatly inappropriate tools for the communication of architectural experience. Responsible for 'the placement of the tactile into the "inaccessible" middle ground' (1987, p.381-2), the media encourages the '[reading of] buildings as picturesque images of structures' rather than allowing individuals to be amenable to 'a direct experience of their corporeal form', he states.

Further discussing the representation and communication of architecture with regard to his dialectical pairing of the visual and the tactile, Frampton highlights the lasting influence of perspective on both the design and perception of built form; agreeing with the observations of Pallasmaa (2005, p.83) and Ronen (2002), he notes the introduction of perspective to have brought with it both a longstanding treatment and understanding of space which is both limiting and prone to creating a sense of detachment. 'At its most reductive,' he states (1987, p.385), 'this mode of perception tends to place undue stress on the *formal representation*. This is often achieved, in our time, at the expense of tactility'.

Stating in his proposed manifesto that '[critical regionalism] is opposed to the tendency in an age dominated by media to the replacement of experience by information' (which often renders us unable to differentiate between the two), Frampton (2007, p.327) has little to write on this subject of this visual bias that has not already been highlighted in this text in relation to the impact of modernism; whilst stressing the importance of the experience over information, and the tactile over the visual, he does not expressly discuss this

dialectic pair and their implications in terms of architectural practice. Despite this, given what we have read and his emphasis on adopting and maintaining an interstitial stance, it seems reasonable to assume that Frampton and his polemic manifesto would staunchly advocate both the haptic connection offered by hand sketching and modelling and their inherent potential for encouraging the formation of sincere and emotional attachments between people and place (Franck & Lepori, 2007; Pallasmaa, 2005; Sennett, 2008).

### **1.7 Critique of Critical Regionalism**

In the debate that has followed the publication of his key texts, there has been much criticism of Frampton's theory of critical regionalism and its relevance and interpretation within the architectural field. Closing this chapter, this section will focus on delivering a brief summary of these critiques, highlighting the most salient points in relation to this body of research.

The eminent historian Neil Leach (2005, p.297) noted that although 'architecture is often linked to questions of cultural identity...[architectural theory] has been preoccupied almost exclusively with form'. Through conceptual objectification and the belief that there is no longer such a thing as a true cultural process, Frampton (and Tzonis and Lefaivre before him) considers the region to be 'a collection of autonomous objects with particular characteristics proximate to one another in time and space' (Cassidy, 2000, p.411). As Allen (2005, p.422) observes, this is testament to the often overlooked relationship between identity and the physical context of a place, which is suffering considerably from a lack of in-depth investigation, as will be further discussed in the following chapter. Favouring the formal abstraction of modern architecture and the increasingly universal thinking of postmodern theory, critical regionalism appears to somewhat neglect the context from which it should be inseparably connected. The conditions and

situations laid out by Frampton negate to acknowledge architecture ‘as a thread within a complex regional tapestry’ (Cassidy, 2000, p.412), with many of the connections between the cited examples and their regional context appearing to be superficial, optimistic (and often invented) projections of the architect. Despite referring to the purported significance of cultural identity and practices in their theory, neither Frampton (1983a, 1983b, 1987) or Tzonis and Lefaivre (1981, 1986, 1990) deliver further explanation or discussion of this issue, instead choosing to touch upon the subject briefly, and in a non-specific manner. Similarly, as Allen (2005, p.421) proceeds to note, these authors often fail to illustrate their written work with images that are indicative of people or life:

‘[s]uch social blindness in architecture is not limited to these regionalist scholars but does appear as a glaring omission, given what critical regionalism, the most dominant and well-known regionalist theory, purports to advocate’.

Whilst critical regionalism has questioned and brought to the fore important architectural issues related to cultural identity, place, tradition and modernity, it has also (as Eggener (2002, p.399) notes) ‘operate[d] as a lens that can flatten, distort, or marginalize the cultural practices it surveys.’

‘Just as postcolonialist tendencies have always been produced by colonialism, so colonialist tendencies necessarily inhabit often optimistically designated postcolonial formations’. (Jacobs, 1996, p.14)

In distinguishing built form that is professed to be both representative of its cultural locality and demonstrative of a freeing, authoritative rhetoric, critical regionalism is, by contradiction, most commonly enforced from a dominant source external to the region (Ingersoll, 1991). Its conjecture and ramifications, although well-intentioned, ‘have undermined its own constructive message and confounded the architecture it upholds’ (Eggener, 2002, p.396). Frampton frequently upholds and designates a relatively limited number of architects and projects (such as those by Mario Botta, Luis Barragán and Alvaro Siza) as being critical regionalist. Critiquing such ‘appropriation’, Eggener (2002, p.396), observes that in order ‘[t]o fit into the critical regionalist paradigm, writers have neglected or distorted much of

the architecture's primary content and character', often giving a misguided and somewhat untrue representation of both the architect and their work. Warning against the impact of such superficial application of architectural theories such as critical regionalism, King (1996, pp.630-631) notes

'these global theories...enable those who produce or adopt them to view the world of others from one particular place, from one point of authority, from one particular social and cultural position. They produce a totalizing vision or overview which is likely to be at odds with the meanings which the inhabitants [...] place on the buildings themselves'.

Avoiding associations with nostalgia and the vernacular, the process of defamiliarization, where the intended dialogue between person and place is forcefully imposed (Nesbitt, 1996) is capable of abstracting (with little or no regard for context) not only regional forms and related dialogues, but also the personal and regional history and associations of an individual (Camizaro, 2006).

In romantic regionalism, the application and interpretation of familiar characteristics encouraged the formation of bonds between person and place; critical regionalism, in contrast, advocated defamiliarization to '[prick] the conscience' and '[de-automize] perception' in an effort to confront 'established actual world' and how it is largely perceived (Schlovsky (n.d.), cited in Tzonis & Lefaivre, 1990, p.489). Despite mindfully outlining architectural regionalism's wide-ranging political approach and influences (which were largely absolutist, antifascist and republican), the 'resistant, reformist, conscience-pricking' nature of critical regionalism defined by Frampton, Tzonis and Lefaivre suggests 'a distinctly progressive, confrontational, even radicalized project' Eggener (2002, p.399), the application of which must surely be questioned due to its very nature (Camizaro, 2006).

Despite Frampton's frequent highlighting of hesitant exemplars, critical regionalist architecture, having neither a style nor commonly recognizable regional connections, is particularly difficult to identify and is 'more often

misunderstood than not' (Camizaro, 2006, p.386). In addition, its dialectical nature makes gaining a basic and practical understanding of the theory problematic. To this end, despite Frampton's writings on the subject being 'immensely influential on practitioners' (Nesbitt, 2006, p.468), critical regionalist theory has proved to be significantly less useful to architects than it has to architectural critics and historians, who themselves can only outline projects which they *believe* to be representative of *their* understanding of critical regionalism (Ingersoll, 1991). As Camizaro (2006, p.386) notes, there is a significant divide between the theoretical development and practical application of critical regionalism's rhetoric; Frampton has never demonstrated an approach to the application of each of his dialectic pairs in the design or construction of architecture, either through the work of others or through his own, despite his professional qualification as an architect.

The focus on dialectic pairs reflects the postcolonial roots of critical regionalism, with the paradox identified by Ricoeur (of 'how to become modern and to return to sources' (Frampton, 1983, p.471) at its core. This key debate (and the significant difficulties faced in attempting to reach a resolved conclusion) sustains critical regionalism and provides the basis for Frampton's championing of an 'architecture of resistance' (Frampton, 1987, p.385). Whilst becoming engrossed with addressing both elements of such oppositions could (in theory) lead to a balance being accomplished, it has also been interpreted that attempting to treat both sides equally may result instead in the creation of tensions where none existed before, indicating that critical regionalism is driven to provoking contention rather than reaching a harmonious conclusion. 'This suggests,' as Camizaro (2006, p.394) notes, 'that within critical regionalism not only are there no stable references with which we might construct a culturally relevant architecture'.

*This chapter opened with a brief summary of the ideals fundamental to modernism, highlighting both the apparent reasons for their emergence and their contribution to the sense of detachment that has subsequently*

*developed between people and place. Four tensions critical to the breakdown of this relationship were then identified, forming headings under which the influence of modernist principles on the approach to place within the field of architectural design could be explored and considered with greater ease. Central to each of these inextricably linked tensions (which exist within our approach to: history and locality; materiality and the construction of meaningful form; the body and the senses, and methods of communication and representation) is a visual bias which has played a major role in fostering a sense of detachment from place.*

*Following this came a comparison of modernism with Frampton's critical regionalism, which (in championing the importance of culture and context in the creation of place whilst also seeking to counter the ocular bias of contemporary architecture) appears to offer something of an antidote to our current situation. Discussed in relation to each of the four tensions identified by the author, this architectural approach was then heavily critiqued, revealing why it has been discounted as a potential method of recovery within the context of this body of work.*

*With its concern for counteracting placelessness through bettering the relationship between person and environment, critical regionalism also shares a key interest with the field of environmental psychology, within which this research is grounded. The following chapter will provide an introduction to this discipline, before an extensive review of place-related literature reveals how this investigation is to proceed.*

## **2 Environmental Psychology: A Literature Review**

*Placing this research theoretically within the discipline of environmental psychology, this chapter will outline key theories and terms associated with place and place attachment, opening with an overview of the field in which its background and key characteristics will be summarized. Following this, the work of key phenomenological place-theorists will be highlighted, before the influence of phenomenology on environmental psychology is illustrated and the critical methodological differences between the two revealed. This first section will then close by discussing the work of the eminent environmental psychologist David Canter, with particular reference to his text 'The Psychology of Place', in which a systematic approach to identifying key features of a place is suggested.*

*The latter portion of this chapter is dedicated to a review of those research findings related to place and place attachment. Following a brief overview of its development as a research interest within the field of environmental psychology, a significant deficit in this area will then be revealed.*

*Defining place within the context of this research, this text will then proceed to highlight some of its many constructs, two of which – place attachment and place identity – will be subsequently explored in greater depth, owing both to their importance and the degree of dispute regarding their relationship. Illustrating the critical link between attachment bonds and restorative experience, Kaplan's Attention Restoration Theory will then be discussed; in identifying four categories of environmental traits acknowledged to be conducive to positive emotional changes (and potentially attachment to place), Kaplan offers a method through which a restorative environment can be evaluated, and, to that end, potentially created.*

## **2.1    *Development and Fundamental Characteristics***

Emerging (in the United States) from within the field of psychology towards the end of the 1950s, environmental psychology was ‘the outcome of a progressive convergence of interests’ (Bonnes & Secchiaroli, 1995, p.1). A primary catalyst for its development was the growing need for the psychological discipline to address the spatio-physical environment; although psychology has always maintained an interest in the human environment, particularly with regard to ‘the primary importance of environmental variables on behavior’ (Wohlwill, 1970, p.311), there had been a distinct lack of focused attention on the physical and spatial settings within which the studied behaviour occurs. As Wohlwill (1970, p.303) observes,

‘[w]hen psychologists have talked of environmental influences, they have rarely been specific about the meaning for them of the concept of the environment; it has been used to refer to the most diverse set of conditions of experience [...]. The physical environment that serves as background and context for behaviour has been of little interest to psychologists; the role of the environment has almost invariably referred to social or interpersonal influences, or else to effects presumed to be ascribable to the milieu in an altogether unspecified sense’.

Canter (1986) is one of many who attribute this oversight to the very nature of laboratory practice, since the laboratory - the setting for the majority of psychological investigations - is far from being a true or accurate representation of the environments studied. Whilst acknowledgement of this shortcoming within the discipline of psychology gave rise to environmental psychology, the development of this new field was greatly accelerated by the growth and correlation of interests external to this situation, as will be further discussed shortly. The increased understanding and acknowledgement of this deficit also brought with it a difficulty in defining a suitable set of ‘theoretical instruments’ that were applicable to the field of environmental psychology but yet relevant and relatable to other disciplines. This (which is also a central issue within this body of research), ‘has always been, and still is, the most crucial problem in [environmental psychology]’, Bonnes and Secchiaroli (1995, p.21) note.



Initial studies in this emergent field were concerned with the psychological impact of physical features of particular settings. A key research group, formed at the City University of New York in 1958 by Harold Proshansky and William Ittleston (who were both key to the founding of the discipline, and first offered the term ‘environmental psychology’ (Stokols, 1995)) , set out to explore the impact of physical and spatial features of psychiatric hospitals on inpatient’s behaviour (Ittleston, 1960; Proshansky, Ittleston & Rivlin, 1970; Proshansky Nelson-Schulman & Kaminoff, 1979)<sup>11</sup>. Over the course of the next decade both the area of interest and the research work of this group broadened in scope, moving from the specific issue of the connection between behaviour and the physical environment of the psychiatric hospital to the wider-ranging issue of the effect of the physical environment in general (Bonnes & Secchiaroli, 1995). Interest in environmental psychology began to grow significantly in the 1970s and 80s - numerous publications were released (Craig, 1970; Proshansky et al., 1970; Wohlwill, 1970), journals were launched (Canter & Craig, 1981; Winkel, 1969), organizations, subdivisions, and even graduate schools were formed, all of which helped to significantly raise the profile of this emerging field of study.

From the beginning, a critical characteristic of environmental psychology has been the necessity of its interdisciplinary connections to fields such as geography and architecture, which share a central interest in the relationship between person and environment. As Proshansky proposes, ‘[a]n [environmental psychology] that was focused on the real world and directly concerned with the solution of complex environmental problems must by definition be interdisciplinary in character’ (1987, p.1474). Bonnes and Secchiaroli (1995) observe that the purpose of this interdisciplinary approach is to offer the greatest amount of collaboration and correspondence between

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<sup>11</sup> Ittleston and Proshansky were not alone in their research into the connections between spatial attributes and human behaviour within psychiatric hospitals - various groups around the world (see Izumi (1957) and Osmond (1957) for examples) were simultaneously investigating similar issues, with such research teams often seeing collaborations between architects and psychologists/psychiatrists who shared mutual interests. Ittleston and Proshansky have been highlighted both for being representative of ‘the best example’ of such work, and for their prominence and importance within the field (Bonnes & Secchiaroli, 1995, p.4).

environmental psychology and related fields, but whilst still allowing environmental psychology to remain a distinct discipline in its own right. In addition to this already existing degree of diversity, those working within the field are from increasingly diverse subject backgrounds, and not all have undergone training in psychology, meaning that the interests, methods of investigation, and views of the discipline are widespread and often conflicting. As could be expected, finding and maintaining the middle-ground with regard to both these issues is a delicate and almost impossible task. There is even little agreement on the title by which this area of study is known; ‘architectural psychology, environmental psychology, man/woman (people) - environment studies, human factors of design or the ontoperivantic (human/environmental) aspects of psychostructural environics, call it what you may [...]’ Mikellides (2007) writes.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to psychology’s neglect of physical and spatial environmental aspects, Bonnes and Secchiaroli (1995) identify three other factors (all external to the discipline) which contributed significantly to the emergence of environmental psychology; ‘the interest of the architectural field and architectural psychology’ (p.3); ‘the interest of the geographic field and behavioural geography’ (p.11); and ‘the ecological-naturalistic field, environmental problems and the UNESCO MAB (Man and Biosphere) programme (p.14). Whilst all three are of considerable importance, it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss anything more than the most relevant and salient points from the first, which is the most applicable in this instance.

### **2.1.1 *Architecture and Architectural Psychology***

The potential benefits of collaboration between architecture and psychology gained real importance and attention in Great Britain after the Second World

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<sup>12</sup> Environmental psychology has been by far the most widely used title for the field within the literature reviewed for this thesis, and as such will be employed throughout the remainder of this thesis.

War, when the field of architectural planning became much more problematic; with an increasingly complicated society, restricted resources and a critical need for post-war construction and reconstruction, planning decisions were required to be carefully considered and of maximum efficiency. As a result, the social sciences were to be promptly involved in these proceedings. At around the same time the British government also initiated and funded several studies into the relationship between human behaviour and physical settings, the results of which fed into the development and creation of law surrounding environmental planning, both in Great Britain and elsewhere (Chapman and Thomas, 1944; Bonnes & Secchiaroli, 1995). Enthusiasm for and interest in this type of research decreased temporarily once post-war construction reached its conclusion, but saw an incline once again in the 1960s with a series of conferences and publications based on the theme of architectural psychology. As has been previously indicated in terms of the development of environmental psychology in America, there was a hope that research in this field could provide the solutions or insight into ‘contemporary societal problems’<sup>13</sup>, many of which were attributable to the impact of modernism (Stokols, 1995, p.823). As was the case in the United States, universities in Britain were the predominant force behind the level of engagement within the subject at that time, although (as noted by Appleyard, 1973) the evolution of such interest occurred in different manners; in Britain the focus had fallen on seeking solutions for professional obstacles but, by contrast, in the United States development was heavily connected to universities and academia.

In the 1950s, around the time that the impetus for the field of psychology to act upon the deficit of knowledge regarding the spatio-physical environment had been felt, a similar movement was occurring across America within the discipline of architecture. Emerging first in schools of architecture and in some larger architectural practices, this shift was a response to

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<sup>13</sup> ‘urban crowding and air pollution; [...] and the design of homes, offices and classrooms that were nonresponsive to occupants’ needs’ (Stokols, 1995, p.823)

‘both [...] the revision imposed by the modern movement of the first part of the century and by contingent historical and social factors encouraging the world of architectural design to collaborate with the social and human sciences and, in particular, with psychology’. (Bonnes & Secchiarioli, 1995, p.4)

Central to such multidisciplinary studies (which were quickly termed ‘architectural psychology’) was the collaboration between professionals from both architecture and psychology. 1958 saw one of the first design investigations (the construction and post-occupancy analysis of student housing) that integrated the work of both, and in subsequent years this pattern was commonly repeated; architects and psychologists met (often at conferences) and shared ideas, often resulting in collaboration, particularly with regard to post-occupancy evaluations (Bonnes & Secchiarioli, 1995).

The incidence of integration between psychology and architecture in American universities grew considerably during the 1950s, perhaps most notably at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where work initiated by Kevin Lynch, an urban planner, led to the publication of the highly influential *The Image of the City*, in which Lynch (1960) proposed that the occupants of cities interpreted their physical context through generating predictable mental maps. Lynch’s ‘revolutionary’ work highlighted a more widespread problem within the field of architecture – a ‘growing dissatisfaction with design, which was defined as ‘egocentric’, seen as primarily aimed at satisfying the aesthetic self-affirmation needs of the architect/designer, who constructed ‘personal monuments’ rather than buildings centred on the needs of their users’ (Bonnes & Secchiarioli, 1995, p.6).

The latter half of the 1960s saw the emergence of a debate pertaining to the requirement for new design procedures in both practical and professional training, resulting in a model comprised of three stages – analysis, synthesis and appraisal (Broadbent & Ward, 1969), which was later incorporated into the Royal Institute of British Architect’s plan of work. The formal introduction of appraisal as a stage in this model meant that the occupants of buildings built under this plan of work should have their responses recorded and analysed in order that the design may be fairly evaluated; this task fell to

psychologists and, as a consequence, provided the path of investigation for environmental psychology in Britain for several years.

The University of Liverpool and the University of Strathclyde both formed multidisciplinary research groups in 1967. Both had the same goal – ‘to develop systematic empirical procedures for evaluating buildings’ (Bonnes & Secchiarioli, 1995, p.8) that could play an active role within the development of an architectural design. In his 1972 text *Psychology for Architects*, David Canter (a contributor to both research groups) strongly emphasized both the essential role for environmental psychology in design and the need for architects and designers to be continually aware of the psychological impact and potential of the environments they were creating.

‘[D]esigners themselves almost certainly assume that they know how ordinary people use their space [...]. We don’t subscribe to the view that architects should provide only what is asked for or what is currently described by the man in the street. His function as a style setter or innovator is also surely essential - but he should know which of his functions he is fulfilling at any given time - otherwise his own special tastes [...] will put him too far out of touch with his consumers’. (Canter and Lee, 1974, p.12)

He observes that beliefs surrounding the psychological impact of typical and common building forms do not appear to be based on scientific findings, but instead on mere assumptions. Echoing the previously acknowledged concerns of Franck and Lepori (2007) and Pallasmaa (2005) regarding the assumptions of architectural designers, Canter (1972, 1977; Canter & Lee, 1974) outlines the responsibility of environmental psychology to provide an honest and evidence-based grounding to such suppositions.

### **2.1.2 A Paradox**

By the mid-1990s, the discipline of environmental psychology was observed to be in something of a self-contradictory situation (Ittleston, 1995; Proshansky, 1990; Stokols, 1995). Despite having undergone a period of rapid growth during the 1960s and 70s, it had since increasingly failed to

keep up with the rate of development of other psychological fields such as cognitive neuroscience, health psychology and community psychology (Boneau, 1992; Linney, 1990; Maeir, Watkins & Fleshner, 1994; McNally, 1992; Stokols, 1995; Rappaport, 1987); in addition, the identity of environmental psychology appears to have become increasingly diffuse (Ittleston, 1995). Proshansky, who was a key member in the emergence of the field, observes:

‘[a]s I look at the field of environmental psychology today, I am concerned about its future. It has not, since its emergence in the early 1960’s, grown to the point where it can match the fields of social, personality, learning, or cognitive psychology. To be sure, it has increased in membership, in the number of journals devoted to it, and even in the amount of professional organizational support it enjoys, but not enough so that one could look at any major university and find it to be a field of specialization in a department of psychology, or, more importantly, in an interdisciplinary center or institute’. (1990, p.28)

Asking ‘[h]ow can the paradox of environmental psychology’s rapid growth and institutionalization, accompanied by an apparent diffusion of identity, be explained?’, Stokols (1995, p.822) acknowledges there to be three prominent and probable answers, the first of which is the complexity of its multidisciplinaryity; whilst critical to the unique nature of the field, it has also resulted in a more dispersed identity which is considerably less easy to define, despite the interlinked disciplines sharing a central interest in the relationships between people and their socio-physical surroundings. Secondly, the extent of environmental psychology has become increasingly international, with its development and approach being understandably influenced and guided by the specific contexts that exist within each country or region (for examples see Hagino, Mochizuki & Yamamoto, 1987; Kuller, 1987; Moore, 1987; Pol, 1993; Sanchez, Wiesenfeld & Cronick, 1987). Thirdly, the conceptions and methods applied within environmental psychology are also integral to the discipline of psychology and the numerous areas it is comprised of; whilst it emerged rapidly (and with considerable strength) as a field in its own right, aspects of environmental psychology have been osmotically incorporated into other areas in the decades that have followed, lessening their power as an identifying feature. Offering reassurance that

issues at the heart of environmental psychology continue to grow in importance in spite of these factors and their impact on the identity of the field, Stokols (1995, p.823) notes 'it seems reasonable to anticipate that virtually all areas of psychology will become increasingly "environmental" in future years'.

### **2.1.3 Phenomenology and Place**

Appearing to offer 'a rich theoretical basis for study' (Manzo, 2003, p.48) phenomenological texts have been acknowledged by many environmental psychologists to play a key role in aiding a basic understanding of and appreciation for the relationships between people and place (Manzo, 2003, p.48). Considering a sense of place and its development, Tuan writes

'[w]hat begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value'. (1977, p.6)

Phenomenology, philosophical in nature, considers place to be indivisible from human existence, and concentrates on the significance of experience and memory of such settings (Husserl, 1970; Seamon, 1982, 1987) 'via a descriptive, qualitative discovery of things in their own terms' (Manzo, 2003, p.48). Connecting all personal experiences, emotion permits places to gain attachment and meaning through 'the steady accretion of sentiment' (Tuan, 1977, p. 33).

As Bonnes and Secchiaroli (1995) note, the use of the term 'place' within the field of environmental psychology rarely has a particular theoretical perspective, and is often substituted in the description of a particular setting. Occasionally, however, it is awarded a theoretical emphasis, perhaps most notably in the work of Canter (1977, 1988) and those who followed his lead in trying to determine a theory related to place (such as Russell & Ward (1982) and Proshansky et al., (1983)). As a result, the definition of place which will be primarily followed within this investigation will be that of Canter;

eschewing phenomenological emphasis and based upon scientific findings, he describes place 'as a quality of a location' which is determined by 'the system of experience that incorporates the personal, social, and culturally significant aspects of situated activities' (Canter, 1996, p.117).

The relatively recent increase in interest and knowledge related to the phenomenological approach (and particularly its uptake into other fields of study such as geography and architecture) is often held accountable for the growing relevance and use of 'place' with regard to environmental psychology. Considering integration between environmental disciplines such as architecture and the emerging field of environmental psychology, Altman (1973) appears to have accurately foreseen a critical problem, as Bonnes and Secchiaroli (1995, p. 162) note:

'he singled out as the first difficulty the diversity of the unit of analysis taken as the point of reference by these two sides [-] in the first case this was represented by 'places' and in the second by 'psycho-environmental processes', which tend to be 'trans-places' (for example, territoriality, privacy, environmental cognitions, etc.)'.

From the outset there has been a considerable degree of disagreement between these fields, hampering the opportunity for collaboration and integration, despite the reliance of architecture (and many of its related disciplines) on the philosophies of the phenomenological school in its development of an understanding and knowledge of place. Although phenomenological contributions continue to be frequently acknowledged in place-related environmental psychology research, the conclusions drawn by the former do not align easily with the traditional methods and outcomes of the latter.

As Bonnes and Secchiaroli (1995) highlight, of significance with regard to the phenomenological approach to the experience of place as a physical environment are philosophers such as Bachelard (1969), Heidegger (1975), Merleau-Ponty (1945) and Norberg-Schulz (1971, 1980). Heidegger's work in this area is particularly well known; his key text *Building, Dwelling, Thinking* (1975) focuses on defining and exploring the process of 'dwelling', through which people create their homes (and which Heidegger felt was a critical



component of our true existence in the world). He also suggests that the opportunity for positive experience can be created through the integration and juxtaposition of the four elements upon which dwelling is reliant (earth, gods, sky and man); in addition, he posits that the deliberate use and overlapping of these constructs (which incorporate dimensions related to spirituality, the environment, and personal and interpersonal needs) is demonstrative of the process of 'sparing and preserving', in which care and consideration for places, people and objects is shown and maintained. Norburg-Schulz's (1980) is widely known for his identification and definition of the *genius loci*, the spirit that is contained within and begins from the natural environment of every place. As with Heidegger's approach, he also identifies a number of dimensions (thing, order, character, light and time), which in this instance refer to the spatial essence and general atmosphere of the place, with an emphasis largely centred on the natural environment and the processes it contains. Norburg-Schulz (1980) proposes that combining multiple dimensions permits the emergence of four distinct classifications of natural place – classical, complex, cosmic and romantic – each of which offers an opportunity for association with the variety offered in terms landscape characteristics and sense of place. Outlining the necessity for correctly identifying the essence of the setting in question, he implies that architectural interventions must respond appropriately to such characteristics in order to be considered successful and conducive to the enhancement of the *genius loci* of a place; strong emphasis is placed upon the negative impact of technological advances, which he deemed to be a key force in removing one's 'direct dependence on places' (1980, p.18).

Although deserving of acknowledgement, it is beyond the scope of this research to discuss the phenomenological school and its key figures in relation to the concept of place in any greater depth. Whilst on the one hand offering a shared interest in meaning in architecture and the holism of the existential relationship between person and place, the ideals and methodological approach of phenomenology are also greatly different to those of environmental psychology; as Bonnes and Secchiaroli (1995) note,

scientific research, including that of a psychological nature, is traditionally systematic, quantitative and measured in character, whereas phenomenological research is metaphorical and entirely qualitative, with little or no uniformity in approach.

#### **2.1.4 Canter's 'The Psychology of Place'**

As has been previously noted, the concept of place began to emerge as a topic of investigation within the field of environmental psychology in the late 1970s, beginning with David Canter, who – in his text *The Psychology of Place* (1977) – presented a 'systematic proposal' (Bonnes & Secchiaroli, 1995, p.170) for aiding a better understanding of the features and impact of the concept of place. This three-part model provided the impetus for several key investigations which followed, such as those by Bonnes, Mannetti, Secchiaroli and Tanucci (1990) and Ward, Snodgrass, Chew and Russell (1988), who analysed the role of activity planning in the person-place relationship; Genereux Ward and Russell (1983), who studied the relationship between specificity in behaviour and place; and Stokols and Shumaker (1981) and Proshansky et al. (1983), who were concerned with the connection between place identity and cultural processes. Bonnes and Secchiaroli (1995, p.170) note Canter's initial proposal and systematic approach to still be highly relevant and of interest today, stating:

'[t]his area of study is moving towards developing what can be defined as 'place theory' in [environmental psychology], but although several steps have been taken in this direction, a great deal of work still remains to be done'.

Canter outlines his intention to take an opposing approach to the generally fragmented and specifically focused nature of environmental-psychological research (which often focuses on individual or specific groups of variables), instead suggesting a more unified approach to 'wholes endowed with significance' (1977, p.1). In further contrast to the majority of preceding work, he also reveals his 'desire to deal with research clearly and directly related to

the experience of the environment' (p.ix), as opposed to exploring findings that emerged from the abstracted experience of laboratory studies<sup>14</sup>; his central concern is

'with those situations in which people live and work, converse with others, are alone, rest, learn, are active or still. This does not mean it is concerned with activities alone, or only with the buildings which house them. It is about those units of experience within which activities and physical form are amalgamated: places'. (1977, p.1)

Presenting an approach to place that eschews the 'molecular tradition' of analyzing the environment as a series of individual elements, Canter (1977) instead acknowledges the need to study the setting as a whole, focusing on cognitive rather than phenomenological response and interpretation. Noting there to be considerably few investigations conducted into the relationship between physical form and psychological processes or impact, he partly attributes this deficit to the difficulties commonly associated with this area of study, and in particular to the seemingly endless number of types and combinations of physical elements that can be studied. Offering his approach as a potential solution to this vast problem, Canter (1977) suggests that the discovery of physical aspects which are widely felt to be critical to a place could be achievable through the use of his tripartite model, and that regardless of the nature of the variables involved, it is possible to uncover them by investigating the commonalities amongst relevant conceptions.

Giuliani et al. (1988) note Canter's proposed method to appear slightly problematic, particularly with regard to his attempt at creating an orderly and methodical approach to an area that had been traditionally largely dominated by a phenomenological approach and its seemingly irrefutable and holistic conclusions. But, as Bonnes and Secchiaroli (1995, p.173) observe, regardless of such difficulties, this proposal provides 'an interesting

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<sup>14</sup> Elaborating (in a statement which is immediately supportive of the earlier discussion regarding our detachment from methods of representation and communication (and subsequently from place)), he proceeds: 'Even the so-called "simulation" of environments by the use of photographs, slides and their like leaves much to be desired in the way of real motivations or experiences, on the part of the respondents. I therefore found myself avoiding studies which did not draw immediately and materially upon actual surroundings, unless their point was very obviously pertinent to the issues at hand'. (1977, p.ix)

point of departure for [...] systematically reorienting the reflections of the phenomenological approach around the construct of place'. In addition (and as has been previously highlighted), it also forms a key influence in several place related investigations and developments, further supporting the potential of its value to the field. In light of its apparent capacity for further development and interpretation (coupled with its relevance to this body of research), Canter's (1977) three-point proposal will be discussed in greater depth in the following chapter, in relation to the development of a creative strategy for design.

## **2.2 Place and Related Constructs: Research Findings**

As Lewicka (2011) notes, the level of interest in the relationship between people and place is continuing to grow steadily, having emerged as a point of interest in approximately sixty percent of relevant research journals within the last decade, and with almost half of those articles being published since 2006. But it has not only been a contemporary concern within the field of environmental psychology - for example, Fried's paper, published 50 years ago in 1963, considered the psychological impact of relocation through coercion; in addition, Kasarda and Janowitz (1974) were among the first to suggest the existence of place attachment predictors, at roughly the same time as human geographers (Buttimer, 1980; Relph, 1976; Seamon, 1980; Tuan, 1974, 1975, 1977) began to compare and contrast the attributes of meaningful place with abstract space. With the 1980s came the initial proposals related to typologies and definitions of place attachment and related constructs (Riger & Lavrakas, 1981; Stokols & Shumaker, 1981; Taylor, Gottredson & Brower, 1985), before the publication of the key text *Place Attachment* by Altman and Low in 1992.

As has been previously touched upon, there is much concern about the current state of people-place research; the majority of the terminology lacks clarity and agreement regarding definition and relationships (Guiliani &

Feldman, 1993; Pretty, Chipuer & Bramston, 2003), which in turn raises questions and debate about the methodological and theoretical basis underlying such investigations (Lewicka, 2011; Morgan, 2010; Stedman, 2003b). Many of the authors and researchers in this area come from different areas of study as well as theoretical and academic traditions, and their differing approaches to gauging related constructs (which, in addition, are very rarely compared and examined) often lead to conflicting and discordant findings (Patterson & Williams, 2005). The resulting lack of lucidity and certainty appears to be preventing the progression of this area of study; whilst other domains continue to move forward through expanding upon their findings in the testing and creation of hypotheses, research into the people-place relationship seems to be trapped by trying to precisely define constructs and their relationships.

Worldwide, much has changed since the key place-person advances of the 1970s and 1980s; it is reasonable to question whether the concept of place has retained its importance and significance to people in the decades that have followed. As Lewicka (2011, p.6) observes, it would also be reasonable to assume that the concept of place<sup>15</sup> would have been lost and overwhelmed by the ‘increased mobility, globalization, growing homogeneity of places and loss of (...) cultural specificity’ that has occurred as a result of modernism (Augé, 1995; Beatley, 2004; Casey, 1997; Katz, 1994; Kunstler, 1993).

But this does not appear to be the case – ‘certain devastating phenomena of this century bring with them, by aftershock as it were, a revitalized sensitivity to place’, Casey (1997, p.xiii) notes. Despite a continual increase in the number of what have been termed ‘non-places’ (Augé, 1995; Beatley, 2004), places appear to have gained in their present-day significance and meaning (Gustafson, 2006; Janz, 2005; Kruger & Jakes, 2003; Terkenli, 1995), substantiating the declarations made by phenomenologists decades ago that

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<sup>15</sup> Traditionally defined as offering boundedness, historical connections, exclusive and individual qualities, and the opportunity for relaxation and protection (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1975, 1977).

‘sense of place is a natural condition of human existence’ (Buttimer, 1980; Heidegger, 1962; Norberg-Schulz, 1979; Seamon, 1980; Tuan, 1975, 1977).

### **2.2.1 Place Scale**

A key characteristic of place is its concentricity - the containment of smaller places within larger places (Low & Altman, 1992; Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1974). Homes are situated in neighbourhoods within towns, which are in turn contained within regions, and then countries, and so on. Globalization and increased mobility have seen a decrease in localization; contemporary societies are no longer limited to their villages and counties, and people today have broader ‘geographical horizons’ (Lewicka, 2011, p.16). Investigations into the attachments formed between people and place tend to avoid scale comparisons, considering only one area of the hierarchy, and as such it is difficult to state accurately how the strength and frequency of attachment bonds varies across the range of place scales. As Lewicka (2011, p. 23) observes in summary,

‘the available research, mostly coming from large national surveys and cross-national comparisons, suggests that people not only show strong attachments to their residence places, but that self categorizations in terms of larger place scales, such as Europe, do not destroy their local sentiments’.

This supports the findings of Graumann (1983), who suggested that numerous place identities are commonplace, and that various environments and locations can impact on their prominence. Bonds to home may become more apparent when a person spends time away, and may, assist in the sustention of such local attachments (Case, 1996; Graumann, 1983). Empirical findings such as this also contradict the increasingly common assertion that the strengthening presence of globalization has significantly contributed to a lesser sense of both national identity and local community (Lewicka, 2011).

Whilst many of the older publications addressed the attachments felt

between people and their homes or places of residence, some of the more recent literature begins to reflect some of the common changes in contemporary life; there has been a significant increase in the number of attachment studies carried out in settings such as: places of work (Milligan, 1998); second (or seasonal) homes (Gustafson, 2006; McHugh & Mings, 1996; Stedman, 2006; Van Patten & Williams, 2008); sacred sites (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 1993); imaginary or virtual places (Droseltis & Vignoles, 2010); and places of recreation (Williams & Van Patten, 1998) – particularly those that are outdoors, such as wilderness places (Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck, & Watson, 1992), sea coasts (Kelly & Hosking, 2009), forests (Smaldone, 2006), mountains (Kyle, Graefe, Manning & Bacon, 2003), and landscapes in general (Fishwick & Vining, 1992; Kaltenborg & Bjerke, 2002). Although acknowledging and supporting the broadening perspective of recent studies of attachment, Manzo (2003) notes that the strength of association with the metaphor of ‘home’ continues to have a somewhat limiting effect on our understanding and investigations of place; ‘an examination of a full range of places, feelings and experiences is essential for an understanding of people-place relationships’, she notes (p.57).

### ***2.2.2 Place Attachment: Physical vs. Social Dimensions***

People can become attached to a place for a multitude of reasons; for some the cause may be social factors (like close interpersonal ties within a community), and for others such bonds can be attributed to physical aspects of a place, such as a strong relationship with nature, natural processes, or stimulating features. Past research on place and place attachment within the field of environmental psychology has been largely dominated by a view that an individual’s sense of place is a social construct, stemming from cultural and behavioural beginnings rather than as a result of experiencing particular physical features and conditions (Brehm, 2007; Brehm, Eisenhauer, & Krannich, 2006; Lewicka, 2011). This is perhaps not surprising, given that

(on a basic level within the field of environmental psychology) research into place attachment followed that of community studies (Fried, 1984), which had a tendency ignore physical place as an area worthy of study in favour of viewing such features as a mere container for social interactions (Gieryn, 2000; Gustafson, 2006). More recently, attention has fallen on the role of nature and natural connections in the generation of place attachment bonds, which has contributed significantly to the development of methods of measurement in relation to physical dimensions of place and place attachment (Brehm, Eisenhauer & Krannich, 2006; Scannell & Gifford, 2010). The work of Stephen and Rachel Kaplan (who have been noted for the volume of research they have carried out and inspired with regard to restorative and natural environments) will be discussed further in due course.

### ***2.2.3 Place Attachment: Predictors vs. Consequences***

Whilst there may be some overlap, predictors and dimensions of attachment to place have distinct differences; analysed separately of acknowledged sentiments, predictors are aspects of attachment which can have a significant impact on the strength of the bond, even though an individual is not necessarily aware of it. Dimensions of place attachment, on the other hand, tend to be studied through asking direct questions, or through carefully devised scales with explicit options relating to both social and natural features of the particular place in question (Scannell & Gifford, 2010), and act as predictors of relevant responses (which tend to be pro-environmental) (Lewicka, 2011). Lewicka (2010), in an extensive review of related literature, distinguishes three categories of place attachment predictors – social, socio-demographic, and physical environmental. Here, due to the constraints and scope of this body of research, only the most relevant category (physical-environmental) will be explored.



### **2.2.3.1 Physical-Environmental Predictors**

Within environmental research, Bolan (1997) distinguishes two types of variable which are capable of affecting an individual's place attachment; 'type of people' (relating to social bonds, feelings of security, length of residence, socio-economic status, etc.), and 'type of place', which describe the physical elements of a setting, such as population heterogeneity and density, and specific physical elements (Gerson et. al., 1977; Sampson, 1988; Woolever, 1992). In turn, physical qualities of a place tend to also be studied in two ways – either by the comparison and rating of places which have distinct physical features, or by written or verbal evaluation by occupants or users of a particular environment (as demonstrated by Bonaiuto et al., 2003, 2006). There have been few studies that have considered how the physical features of a setting as a whole may be linked to an individual's sense of place and attachment. Those that do (such as Bonaiuto et al. (1999) and Brown et al. (2003, 2004)) suggest, in a general conclusion, that the presence of aesthetically pleasing built forms, quiet areas and green spaces are all capable of having a positive impact.

As Farnum, Hall and Kruger (2005, p.42) note, research which seeks to identify 'what relates to what' (in terms of particular physical features and attachment bonds) is generally unable to offer lucid and comprehensible knowledge; the quantity and quality of potentially influential physical elements – whether urban, architectural or natural – is limitless and unpredictable. Measuring physical-environmental predictors can also pose considerable difficulty. Approximate measurements of physical elements are generally taken in one of two ways - either by calculating objective size (such as building scale or density) (see Gifford, 2007; Gillis, 1977; Hur, Nasar, & Chun, 2010, and Lewicka, 2010 for examples), or by estimations made (regarding elements such as spatial cleanliness and the presence of litter) by either the participants or a qualified commentator. Subjective estimates made by untrained resident individuals, which are commonly used for the sake of convenience and ease, are widely acknowledged to be considerably

less accurate. As Lewicka notes, the Index of Perceived Residential Environment Quality (PREQ) (developed and tested by Bonaiuto, Fornara & Bonnes, 2003; Fornara et al., 2009), which contains a vast collection of indices related to the physical qualities of buildings (such as density, volume, and perceived aesthetics), may strengthen the findings of such studies.

Although not always regarded as the most consistent of attachment factors (most likely due to the aforementioned difficulties), physical-environmental predictors are still acknowledged to be of significant value. On several instances these predictors have collectively been found to have the highest degree of influence over attachments, and also a notable ability to better predict attachment to residence and community (Fried, 1982). Identified from the existing literature, some of the most important physical-environmental predictors in such instances appear to be: an absence of noticeable discourtesy amongst occupants; the existence of (and access to) nature; peaceful areas; a sense of community and safety; and good quality, aesthetically appealing buildings (Bonaiuto et al., 1999; Brown et al., 2003, 2004; Fried, 1982; Harlan et al., 2005; Lewicka, 2011). Also noticeable is the apparent potential for physical features to promote social relations, indirectly impacting on attachment to place as a result (see Gifford, 2007; Gillis, 1977; Lewicka, 2010; Katz, 1994; Kim & Kaplan, 2004; and Sugihara & Evans (2000), for both positive and negative examples).

A theoretical basis linking the physical aspects of places with people's sense of place attachment is, unfortunately, lacking. Offering an alternative to economic and social factors that (in support of the previous discussion) he understood to only account for a small part of the variance of attachment to place, Kaplan (1984, p.130) suggests:

‘our focus must turn to the remaining environment, to the physical world in which people cope and function and, hopefully, find attachment. It is in this area that the work reported here is the most limited. There is little emphasis on the physical environment and a paucity of measures of people's reactions to it’.

Beginning to discuss this at a deeper level, he then proceeds to state that

‘[i]t seems abundantly clear that future research on attachment will have to become increasingly concerned with [...] elusive yet potent “intangibles”, which at present are only dimly understood’.

The strongest and most prolific examples of “intangibles”<sup>16</sup> which Kaplan felt warranted further investigation were *legibility*, the *perception* of and preference for the visual environment, and the *compatibility* of the setting with human purposes (Kaplan, 1984, p.126). *Legibility*, the first of these concepts (also referred to by Kaplan (1984, p.131) as ‘mapability’), refers to the ease with which an individual can navigate and discover more about a place. Expanding on this, Kaplan notes that ‘[t]he sense of place concept suggests a setting with which one feels familiar even if one has never been there before’, which would leave the occupants with heightened feelings of security and personal confidence and capability.

The *perception* of and preference for the visual environment involves both the spatial and the visual composition of a particular setting, viewed ‘from a more global perspective’ (Kaplan, 1984, p.131). It is suggested that this factor would address the interpretation and analysis of characteristic views or scenes of the setting in question, with physical conditions such as spatial diversity, scale, and enclosure expected to emerge as key components.

The third of these ‘intangible’ elements relates to the congruence between the individual’s purpose within the environment they are occupying. As Kaplan (1984) observes, an individual’s ability to function efficiently can be greatly affected (and supported) by their surroundings; the user may deem an environment to be unsuitable and incompatible if it causes them to become disorientated or agitated. Although often immediately recognised by the occupant, it has been suggested that environmental incompatibility is occasionally only realised by experience of a setting which is uncommonly high in *compatibility* (S. Kaplan, 1983; Kaplan, 1984; Kaplan & Talbot, 1983).

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<sup>16</sup> Qualities or physical elements that have the potential to influence an individual’s attachment to a particular environment (Kaplan, 1984).

Several decades have passed since Kaplan made these suggestions, yet – as Lewicka (2011), in a thorough review of related literature, notes – neither this investigation, nor any other bearing similarity, appears to have been realized and investigated through application within the built environment. These three elements share a dialogue and, as a result, something of an overlap. Whilst they are extremely useful indicators of potential areas of study, Kaplan’s descriptions are brief and merely suggestive, and as with much of the literature related to place and place attachment, the explanations of the terminology somewhat lacking in clarity and are, at times, difficult to understand in terms of potential implications for architectural design, leaving ample scope for misinterpretation.

## ***2.3 Place, Place Attachment, Self-Regulation, and Restorative Environments: Terminology and Relationships***

### ***2.3.1 Place***

As was discussed earlier, the study of place within the context of this research is to have a theoretical strategy that informs practice, rather than a purely phenomenological emphasis, and, as such, will follow the lead of Canter (1996, p.117), who views place ‘as a quality of a location’ determined by ‘the system of experience that incorporates the personal, social, and culturally significant aspects of situated activities’ (Canter, 1996, p.117).

Although a central concept in environmental psychology, a consensus on how to describe or quantify how individuals connect emotionally with a place has not yet been reached (Lewicka, 2008); whilst these undefined bonds are discussed under headings such as place attachment, sense of place and place identity, the relationship between such constructs (along with the question of whether the phenomena they describe is the same) also remains unclear and under much scrutiny (Kyle, Graefe, Manning & Bacon, 2004). But, despite discrepancies and disagreements, it is commonly noted that the generation of

emotional connections with places – which, in some form, are constantly present in each of us (Cuba & Hummon, 1993; Gustafson, 2001a; Williams & McIntyre, 2001) - is vital to attaining psychological equilibrium and the capabilities to adjust appropriately (Rowles, 1990). Alongside this, the development of attachment bonds has been noted to greatly assist in encouraging local involvement and social interaction (Brown, Perkins, & Brown, 2003; Guardia & Pol, 2002; Vorkin & Riese, 2001), affirming personal identity and acquiring feelings of stability (Hay, 1998).

Of all the concepts that define affective bonds between people and places, two are of particular interest in this instance; place attachment and place identity. Both create hypotheses to suggest predictability in an individual's emotional reaction and feeling towards places that – through experience- have become personally significant (Lewicka, 2008). Both concepts and their relationship to each other will be subsequently discussed.

### **2.3.2 *Place Attachment***

Attachment is defined as essentially an 'affection or regard (for)' (Pearsall, 1998, p.107), describing positive feelings or emotional connections between people and places; Hernández et al., (2007, p.310) define place attachment as 'the affective link that people establish with specific settings, where they tend to remain [or return to] and where they feel comfortable and safe', proceeding to note that the most examined factor recognized to influence place attachment is length of residence and its relationship to the degree of attachment felt (see Riger & Lavrakas, 1981; Taylor, Gottfredson, & Brower, 1984). In addition, Stedman (2003) acknowledges physical attributes (and resulting symbolic meanings) to be notably influential - particularly if an indication of the place history is given. Such indications and recognition of place history are acknowledged to encourage and boost place attachment (Stedman, 2003; Lewicka, 2005; Low, 1992), with historical environments generally being favoured over contemporary architecture, epitomizing

tradition and giving an impression of continuity (Devine-Wright & Lyons, 1997; Hay, 1998; Hayden, 1997; Nasar, 1998). Discussing evidence that those experiencing place attachment demonstrate a much keener interest in the history of a significant place than those with lesser or weaker affective bonds, Lewicka's 2005 study suggests that place attachment is also proportionate to the degree of interest into (and therefore knowledge of) the history of the place in question.

### **2.3.3 Place Memory**

The identity of a place is unique to its history and is not defined by a distinct group of inhabitants, even with regard to those who reside there at the time; the variety of people and their religions or ethnic groups – all who have lived there are influential in the creation of the unique character and history of a place (Lewicka, 2008).

Paez, Besabe, & Gonzalez (1997, cited in Lewicka, 2008, p.212) note that '[h]uman memories are basically social memories'- implying that the majority of our recollections rely heavily on our place within a social network, whether it is ethnic, national, or familial. Social psychologists and sociologists describe shared memories (often regarding events or occasions which took place before an individual's lifetime) as social or collective memories (Connerton, 1989; Devine-Wright & Lyons, 1997; Fentress & Wickham, 1992; Lewicka, 2008; Paez et al., 1997); generally existing as collective memories of past events (and belonging to groups or communities rather than individuals), what is recalled 'depends not on personal experience but on oral traditions, cultural transmissions or own motivation to do the detective work in discovering the past' (Lewicka, 2008, p.212).

### **2.3.4 Place Identity**

An essential component of self (Hernández et al., 2007; Lalli, 1992; Proshansky, Fabian, & Karminoff, 1983; Wester-Herber, 2004), place attachment appears to be most commonly seen to ‘accrue to places that fulfil people’s emotional needs and enable them to develop and maintain their identities’ (Kaiser & Fuhrer, 2001, p.573). As Hernández et al. (2007) and Stedman (2002) note, place identity, considered an element of personal identity, can be defined as a method through which individuals distinguish themselves by a sense of belonging to a significant place. Developing as a response to cognitions regarding the physical attributes and features of a setting and the quality and type of experience had there (Bernardo & Palma, 2005; Proshansky et al., 1983; Wester-Herber, 2004), a sense of place identity can serve to generate and maintain self-esteem and self-efficacy, alongside creating a sense of individuality (Lewicka, 2008; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996).

‘These cognitions are memories, ideas, feelings, attitudes, values, preferences, meanings, and conceptions of behaviour and experience which relate to the variety and complexity of physical settings that define the day-to-day existence of every human being. At the core of such physical environment-related cognitions is the ‘environmental past’ of the person; a past consisting of places, spaces and their properties which have served instrumentally in the satisfaction of the person’s biological, psychological, social, and cultural needs’. (Proshansky, 1978, p.59)

In the field of psychology, however, the concept of place identity – defined as ‘those dimensions of self that define the individual’s personal identity in relation to the physical environment’ (Proshansky, 1978, p. 147) refers to an attribute of an individual rather than that of a place. In line with the stance of Lewicka (2008), within this body of research place identity will be considered in the psychological sense – ‘as self-categorization in terms of place’ (Lewicka, 2008, p.212). In addition, this work assumes attachment to place to be ‘not only one aspect of place-identity, but a necessary basis for it around which other social or cultural definitions and cognitions of the place are built [...] because if it is assumed that the physical environment is involved in self-regulation, then attachments or aversions to it are necessary’ (Korpela, 2012,

p.25).

#### **2.3.4.1      *Place Identity and Place Attachment***

There is little consensus amongst the preceding research on place as to the relationship between place attachment and place identity (Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck & Watson, 1992). Whilst place attachment has also been seen as a conceptual component of place identity (Pretty, Chipuer & Bramston, 2003), Hernández et al. (2007) suggest that attachment to place precedes (and occurs separately to) the creation of place identity; this implies that a sense of attachment may not be enough for a place to be absorbed and drawn upon as an element of one's personal identity (Lewicka, 2008). Although a connection between the two is widely recognised, research on place and related constructs provide little supporting evidence that the development of a sense of place attachment is reliant on the presence of place identity. Expanding on this, Lewicka (2008, p.212) observes that

‘[o]ne may feel attached to a place for different reasons i.e., the emotional bonds that people develop with places may be a product of different symbolisms and thus of different identities’.

For example, attachment to a place which is also of significance in relation to personal identity may occur due to familial roots, a close network of friends who remain there, or a fondly remembered previous history (Gustafson, 2001b; Lewicka, 2008; Low, 1992; Manzo, 2003; Milligan, 1998; Relph, 1976).

Korpela and Hartig (1996) note that preceding research on place attachment and place identity had taken place separately from that of restorative environments, with few studies appearing to acknowledge the experiential similarities between the two (see Fuhrer, Kaiser, & Hartig (1993) and Korpela (1991) for examples). Korpela, supported by the work of Epstein (1983), proposes that an individual's self esteem, notion of self, and emotional



fluctuations can all be regulated through the immediate ‘physical environment, its objects and places’; in turn, this suggests that

‘place-identity can be defined as consisting of cognitions of those physical settings and parts of the physical environment, in or with which an individual-consciously or unconsciously-regulates his experience of maintaining his sense of self’. (1989, p.245)

In summary, a personal sense of place identity appears to be largely driven by the process of emotion or self-regulation in an environment that is both restorative and significant. Thus, place identity could be seen to exist in its own right, operating as a comprehensive and rational response. This in turn implies that attachment to place and place identity are closely linked, with place attachment forming a foundation for the resulting sense of identity (Korpela, 1989).

### ***2.3.5 Restorative Experience, Favourite Places, and Attachment***

A review of preceding research highlights the common acknowledgement that people use specific places in the regulation of both emotion and self (Korpela, Hartig, Kaiser & Fuhrer, 2001). Making the widely accepted observation that an individual’s experience of place can play a role in such regulation alongside the creation of a sense of place identity, Korpela et al. (citing Kaiser and Fuhrer (1996)), state that

‘place attachment is implicit in place identity; it accrues to places that fulfill people’s emotional needs and enable them to develop and maintain their identities’. (2001, p.573)

In a summary of their previous research findings, Korpela et al. then proceed to acknowledge that favourite places, typically rich in features conducive to restoration, offer a great deal of support for personal regulation, and, in addition, that the analysis of such places provided the initial catalyst for bridging the divide between the research areas of place attachment and restorative environments. Acknowledged to commonly have attributes which

are intriguing and aesthetically pleasing, favourite places permit uninhibited and liberated personal expression, allowing departure from social stress whilst affording the opportunity for mental clarity and personal reflection (Korpela, 1991; Korpela & Hartig, 1996; Korpela et al., 2001).

It is widely accepted that natural features are one the most important characteristics of favourite places, along with the potential for privacy (Cooper Marcus, 1997; R. Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Korpela et al., 2001; Ulrich, Simons, Losito, Fiorito, Miles & Zelson 1991), ahead of residential environments and the home, which is also significant in encouraging emotional regulation and expressing identity (Bih, 1992; Brown & Werner, 1985; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Mehta & Belk, 1991; Newell, 1997; Smith, 1994; Sommer 1990). Characteristically, restorative experience also contains a great deal of potential with regard to self-regulation (Korpela et al., 2001) - encouraging reflection on self, and instigating an improvement in mood and regeneration of an individual's directed attention capacity. Supporting the suggestion that restorative experience, place attachment and place identity are heavily interlinked, Korpela et al., (2001) observe that such an experience (particularly in a setting which could be relied upon restoratively) would greatly encourage the development of attachment bonds between people and place.

#### **2.3.5.1 Self-regulation**

Self-regulation, by definition of Vuorinen (1990), is the manner in which the psychological impacts of physical, social, or environmental factors are dealt with through mental activity. Regulation of both self and emotion is recognised to permit adaptation and effective functioning in conditions where an individual's emotional response may be heightened; this adaptive process is guided by two key principles (constancy and self-determination) working in tandem to create the opportunity for an individual (as best they can within their ability and relative situation) to construct comprehensible consequences

which will be of ultimate betterment to not only to experience but to self-esteem (Korpela et al., 2001).

Vuorinen (1990) notes that the process of self-regulation results from the utilization of mental, social, environmental and physical strategies. The purpose of mental strategies is to attain emotional equilibrium and a continuity of individual self-experience, and is achieved through the appropriate application of images, motives, intentions and affects. Largely relying on others for a positive output, social strategies go beyond physiological systems, and see reciprocal relationships (relating to exercise or social interaction, for example) develop between an individual and their environment (Izard & Kobak, 1991). An activity such as exercise could also be perceived as a physical strategy - through 'use of the body with all its somatic processes' (Korpela et al., 2001) an individual may be able to build and control a strong self-image. Similar to the social system of approach, environmental strategies also extend to place and an individual's surroundings. Citing Wölfling's (1996) study as an example of this, Korpela et al. (2001) observe that alongside social bonds, both use and attachment of place are able to assist in the regulation of emotion and self.

As noted by Korpela (1989, p.244), Kaplan (1983) 'has developed a basic process approach to the person-environment fit'. Using processes critical to human functioning (planning, perception, and attention) as a point of departure, he offers the observation that if cognitive clarity is to be seen as key to motivation, then reflection - a contemplative process - is critical. He proceeds to suggest that a process of this sort is permitted in a particular sort of setting (a restorative environment) for which people have 'an intuitive sense' (Korpela, 1989 p.244, citing Kaplan, 1983). Such environments, of which holiday destinations and natural locations are common examples, are pleasant and satisfying by nature, leading to the suggestion that an individual's physical environment could form a strategy through which emotion and self-regulation could be achieved. As Korpela (1989, p.244) notes, 'it must be emphasized that although there is nothing especially new

about the idea, its theoretical and empirical development has been neglected’.

### **2.3.6 Restorative Environments**

The quantity of research into restorative environments has increased dramatically within the last twenty years, with the majority of investigations utilizing Kaplan’s (1995) Attention Restoration Theory, which supports the hypothesis that the human capability to focus attention becomes greatly lessened by concentrated or sustained cognitive exertion, often leading to a degree of mental exhaustion and a severe decline in our ability to focus our attention directly on a subject. Kaplan and Talbot (1983), in a study of wilderness environments, proffered four differing qualities (which will be discussed at a later stage in this chapter) that are inherent in restorative environments. A later revision of these qualities by Kaplan and Kaplan in 1989 (and then again in 1995) has subsequently provided a method of measurement for particular elements of restorative environments, as Ouellette et al. (2005) note (for examples see Cimprich, 1993, 1999; Faber Taylor, Kuo & Sullivan, 2002; Hartig, Evans, Jamner, Davis & Gärling, 2003; Hartig, Korpela, Evans & Gärling, 1997; Hartig, Mang & Evans, 1991; Kuo, 2001; Kuo & Faber Taylor, 2004; Kuo & Sullivan, 2001; Laumann, Gärling & Stomark, 2001; Tennessen & Cimprich, 1995).

In an analysis of the relationship between people and environments, Kaplan (1983, p.311), highlights the ‘considerable attention’ that had been devoted to this area in the preceding years; despite this, he notes that those involved with the design and construction of environments have largely failed to translate related findings and theories into architecture which is congruent to the true needs of people. Attributing this to the lack of guidance within the research on how these findings might impact upon our approach to (and ultimately our experience of) the built environment, Kaplan (1983, p.324) suggests that a ‘supportive environment’ would ideally offer minimal distraction, a reasonable degree of spatial and experiential choice, and a high enough

degree of legibility so that orientation within the environment is as effortless as possible.

Stressing the importance of being able to access restorative and supportive environments easily, Kaplan highlights the manner in which our day to day lives can be seen to deplete our capability for directed attention, stating:

‘[m]any environments we experience everyday – schools, hospitals, workplaces, transportation systems – are notoriously illegible and frequently fraught with distraction [...]. These various factors, taken, singly, might seem to be little more than petty annoyances; but they are persistent and often pervasive, and their cumulative impact is not necessarily trivial’. (1983, p.329)

Also identified to have a negative impact is our increasing reliance on and use of aspects of technology such as computers and television, as identified by Canin (1992) and Kaplan (2001) respectively. As a result of these factors, it appears that a significant number of people do not find the environment they live or work in to be either supportive or restorative, but in fact the opposite, depleting their attention reserves that are necessary for effective everyday functioning (Kaplan, 1983). Citing Kaplan and Kaplan (2003), Ouellette, Kaplan, and Kaplan (2005, p.580) observe that fatigue of one’s directed attention – relied upon during interpersonal or work related interactions (Korpela et al., 2001) - often leads to a lack of resilience and a negative impact on one’s well-being (Kaplan, 1983), as well as ‘irritability, distractibility, impulsiveness, and impaired capacity to make and follow plans’ (see Kaplan, 1995, p.170 – 172 for a more in-depth discussion). The depletion of directed attention is accepted to be unpleasant and undesirable, implying that an individual suffering such symptoms will want to alleviate their discomfort by seeking a restorative experience (Korpela et al., 2001). James (1892) observed the existence of a contrasting second type of attention (which he titled ‘indirect’, but in Kaplan’s Attention Restoration Theory (1995) is referred to as ‘fascination’) that is automatic and unconscious, and is a reaction to a powerful and fascinating circumstance. Recovery of directed attention is dependent upon this involuntary response, which is called into play by restorative environments (Ouellette et al., 2005), which are capable of

holding one's attention effortlessly.

Although it has been acknowledged that Kaplan's Attention Restoration Theory refers to the general physical environment (Kaplan, 1995; Staats & Hartig, 2004), empirical studies have tended to focus on environments with strong connections to nature and natural processes (rather than to urban features), and where one can be alone, revealing that they are often regarded as the most effective and the most popular setting for encouraging restoration, even if only visited for a short period of time (see Canin, 1992; Herzog, 2002; Kaplan, 1973, 1993, 1995, 2001; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Ouellette et al. 2005; Talbot & Kaplan, 1986; Staats & Hartig, 2004; Wells, 2000). Despite the apparent advantage held by nature in terms of supporting the restorative process, its occurrence (and, subsequently, the degree to which restoration is experienced) is ultimately reliant on the relationship and degree of harmony between person and environment (Kaplan, 2001). A study by Francis and Cooper Marcus (1991) reveals the use of natural environments as a means of restoration and the regulation of emotion for distressed individuals; the majority of such places were reported to offer an opportunity for solitude, privacy and reflection, alongside evoking a sense of calm (Cooper Marcus, 1997). Kaplan (2001) notes a defining characteristic of Attention Restoration Theory to be its identification of four qualities against which a restorative environment is measured.

[T]hese properties of restorative environments are: (1) a sense of being away – physically or mentally removed from the activities that are attentionally demanding, (2) fascination, facilitating involuntary attention by the intrinsic interest of the situation, (3) the perception of extent, that is giving one the sense of being somewhere with sufficient scope that one can dwell there for a while, whether or not the physical place is vast, and (4) compatibility, the perceived match between the person's informational needs and what the environment provides'. (Ouellette et al., 2005, p.176)

With the ability to aid in the identification of environmental features and relationships potentially conducive to both attention restoration and a sense of attachment to place, these four characteristics (which will be discussed in much greater depth in the following chapter) contribute to one's attention

being preserved and held effortlessly.

Often undetectable in its occurrence (Kaplan, 2001), the process of restoration may occur in multiple stages; given the chance to spend a prolonged period of time in a restorative environment, an individual may unknowingly be afforded the opportunity and ability for personal reflection on life and troubling matters (Korpela et al., 2001). Restorative experience can have a profound impact on a person, positively affecting their sense of self and their ability to function effectively, as well as increasing feelings of positivity towards their capabilities and potential in life. As Kaplan (2001, p.499) notes, once a person has ‘personally experienced such a transformation, [they are] far more likely to put a priority on restorative opportunities in the future’, suggesting that the formation of attachment bonds between people and such environments would be increasingly likely. As Korpela et al. (2001, p.573) observe in summary, ‘place identity, place attachment, and restorative experiences can be viewed as nested and reciprocally influential within self and emotion regulation.’

*With the development of environmental psychology in the 1950s came the realization that devising an interdisciplinary method of working that could be easily understood by all parties would prove extremely problematic. Recognising the need for this issue to be addressed, David Canter (1977) proposed a systematic, cross-disciplinary method through which significant features of any given place could be identified and understood. Although providing the impetus for multiple valuable investigations in the decades that have followed, related studies have diverged to varying degrees from Canter’s original line of enquiry into place and place attachment.*

*Influenced by a variety of factors such as length of residence, symbolic meanings and place history, attachment to place is recognized to commonly occur in restorative environments - settings which aid the maintenance of identity, commonly addressing the emotional needs of the individual*

*through engagement with nature, natural processes and self. Such environments are recognized to share four key traits – a sense of being away, extent, fascination and compatibility - which Kaplan's Attention Restoration Theory (1995) outlines and explores.*

*Whilst research into place-related theories has grown in popularity and importance, previous investigations have focused primarily on post-construction responses of people to place, rather than considering how such knowledge could be utilized during the creation of architectural design. In response, the following chapter will outline the aims, creative strategy and methodology of this research, taking into account key issues and theories that have emerged from this review of literature, with particular reference to the work of both Canter (1977) and Kaplan (1995).*



### **3 Aims, Creative Strategy and Methodology**

*As we have learned, there is a deficit of information regarding how the physical aspects of an environment can impact upon the formation of attachment bonds between person and place, and how related findings could be transferred from environmental psychology to architecture; this body of research aims to encourage a deeper investigation into the psychological impact of physical and spatial aspects of environmental variables whilst also encouraging a heightened level of collaboration between these two fields.*

*This chapter will begin by outlining the primary aims of this investigation, before proceeding to discuss Canter's 1977 text 'The Psychology of Place' in more depth, with particular regard to his proposed approach for uncovering constituent parts of place. Following this will be a summary (collated from the findings of enviro-psychological studies) of the environmental traits that Kaplan (1995) has identified to be central to restorative experience (and potentially to place attachment), before the roles of these two theories within the context of this research are revealed.*

*Considering the relationship between research and design, several primary approaches will then be outlined, locating this body of research within a methodological context. A discussion on the process of architectural design will consider how common procedures within contemporary practice can contribute to a sense of detachment from place, through encouraging an ocular bias and negating to acknowledge the importance of the inherent potential contained within drawing and modelling by hand. Closing this chapter will be a discussion on the personal place imagery of the architect and its overlooked potential as a tool in the creation of environments conducive to the formation of attachment bonds.*

### **3.1 Aims**

Together, this thesis and the accompanying design practice seek to:

- *explore and further a generalized, non context-specific strategy through which prominent place-related theories could be translated from within the field of environmental psychology for use within the discipline of architectural design.*
- *explore the potential application of this strategy through the documentation and analysis of context-specific responses relevant to an existing architectural brief.*
- *promote and explore a creative approach to architectural design which reinstates and emphasizes the importance of the haptic connection in the dialogue between the architect and the realities of place and context.*
- *encourage close collaboration and knowledge transfer between the fields of environmental psychology and architectural design, in order that successful strategies for the creation of place may be further developed and applied.*

### **3.2 Strategies from Environmental Psychology**

#### **3.2.1 Canter's Place Theory**

Regarded as high in both interest and relevance to contemporary society, Canter's 1977 text *The Psychology of Place* has influenced a number of research investigations, examples of which have been listed in the previous chapter. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, however, Canter's proposal (which offers a model for identifying and better understanding the constituents of place) does not appear to have been utilized in the direct investigation of attachment to place and how it may be encouraged within the built environment.

Emerging largely as a potential solution to the difficulties in (and subsequent

lack of) research into the relationship between the physical components of the built environment and their psychological impact, Canter's systematic model of place theory, has, in comparison to other topics within the field of environmental psychology, remained relatively untouched. As Bonnes and Secchiarioli (1995, p.170) note, 'although several steps have been taken in this direction, a great deal of work still remains to be done.'

Echoing the views previously highlighted in the opening chapter regarding the detrimental impact of 'the increasing international homogeneity' of architecture (1997, p.5), Canter remains optimistic that the development and application of psychological place theory could reintroduce experientially rich and environmentally diverse opportunities; serving to counter the detrimental legacy of modernism 'through the creation of places more appropriate to their inhabitants' (1977, p.5), Canter, like Frampton (2007) and Morris (1969), felt many of the ailments of contemporary society to be rooted in our abuse of our own environment. Our physical context is critically important to what Canter (1977, p.6) terms to be 'our sane survival'. He notes, however, that our tangible environment should never be determined by adherence to either 'polemic or opinion' (of which Frampton's (1983b, 1987) development of critical regionalism may be regarded as an example). Highlighting analysis of gathered evidence as an alternative, he suggests that

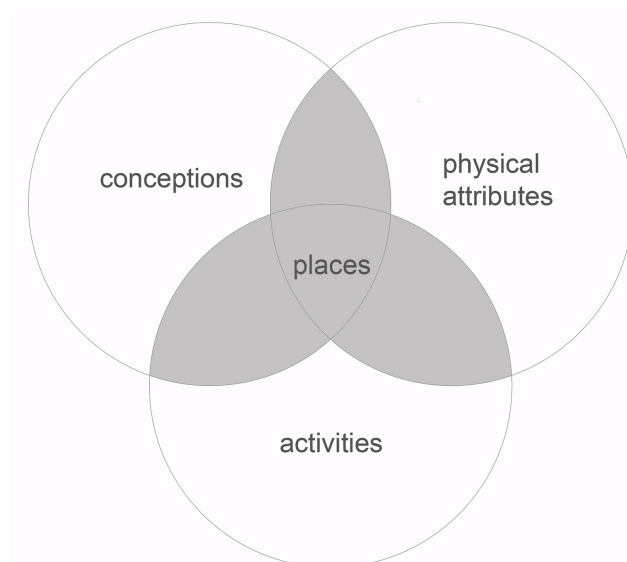
'[t]he conceptions which people have of the places in which they find themselves, are frequently the scientific key which will unlock the processes by which those places have their impact'. (1977, p.6)

Subsequently, one of the primary aims of this systematic method was to enable an understanding of both the actions of an individual and their interpretation of their surroundings in relation to a given location, in order that the physical constituents of that place may be identified and utilized in design. Echoing the observations of Frank and Lepori (2007) and Pallasmaa (2005) which were noted in the opening chapter, Canter (1977, p.4) acknowledges the importance of the resulting architectural response being based upon the subjective perceptions of the eventual users of the

environment rather the objective projections of the designers;

‘[b]y virtue of being an environmental decision-maker, a designer’s conceptual system is likely to be different from that of people not in that role. There is thus great possibility for a mismatch between creator and user. This mismatch may only be resolved by utilising the procedures which will be referred to in earlier chapters for making public the conceptual systems of *all* involved’.

In discussing how one might identify the key factors which contribute to place creation, Canter asserts that ‘places [are] inevitably intertwined with the physical properties of their location’ (1986, p.8), and cannot be truly ascertained without first identifying the physical conditions and variables of the given location, the behaviour or activities that it will contain, and the human perceptions of that environment. The mutual and reciprocal relationships between these three components (which are, respectively, physical attributes, activities and conceptions) can be explained by the way of ‘[a] visual metaphor’ (Canter, 1977, p. 158) (Figure 3.1). As an integrated system, the intention is that any one of these three components could be used as a starting point in uncovering ‘[the description] of what is psychologically significant about a place’ (1986, p.6).



**Figure 3.1** Canter's 'visual metaphor for the nature of places' (1977, p.158)

As was touched upon in the preceding chapter, Canter (1977) attributes the

lack of research into the relationship between physical form and psychological perceptions of place to the infinite variety and combination of individual environmental components that present themselves to the researcher. His method, as a response to counter this problem, proposes a generalised approach which aids the identification of the environmental attributes perceived to contribute to a sense of place within a particular context; rather than selecting one of a myriad of attributes to study, the aim is to reveal the attributes which are of importance in each specific instance and location, regardless of their nature. Once identified, it is possible that these environmental characteristics may be linked together to form a broader, more cohesive picture of the definition of place within any given context;

'[b]ut whatever the variables turn out to be, we may start looking for them by examining the conceptions which people have and the groupings which emerge from those conceptions, followed by a search for the physical [and environmental] attributes linked to those groupings'. (Canter, 1977, pp.159-160)

In a discussion and further explanation of the key role of the more complex *conceptions* component of his model, Canter observes that, predictably, people's conceptions of a place can be extremely diverse and unique, making responding in an appropriate manner which meets the needs of each individual impractical and most likely impossible. Acknowledging this, he suggests that the focus should therefore fall on identifying and responding to the commonalities within the noted conceptions of the primary group(s) of people who will be using the place in question. In light of the findings of studies into memory, cognition, and space (such as those carried out by Lee (1968) and Lynch (1960)), Canter proposes the recording of observations and cognitive representations in order to appropriately uncover conceptions of place; identifying three differing manners in which this could be achieved (sketching, verbal or written description), he highlights the importance of gaining a deeper understanding of the experiences of those being observed through correctly employing such methods. If, for example, one was to assume a distant, external position when observing others (before transferring what would then be a somewhat removed and projected

interpretation of results to the process of design decision-making), the end result could only be the manipulation of the eventual occupants; in order to create an environment which is in harmony with the needs of others, one must truly understand and respond to their observations through drawing directly on their experiences (1977, pp.182-183). Asking an individual to sketch or describe a particular place or setting from memory alone (unguided by the researcher) is often an extremely valuable and rich process in terms of revealing the key elements of interest or attachment within that environment. As Canter notes, despite inherently containing '[greater] potential for use in early stages of design' (1977, p.160), the vast majorities of such studies fail to focus on environments which have yet to be created, and are instead centred around the cognitive representation of places which have already been built. In addition, requesting written or verbal descriptions of a location can also yield a wealth of rich information, regardless of whether the responses are 'open-ended or constrained' (1977, p.161); what is important, however, is that such accounts are delivered in the person's own words.

The procedures of distinguishing places and the significant elements of which they are comprised are considered to 'provide a valuable link to design decision making' (Canter, 1977, p.161) and, unlike so many other research findings within the field of environmental psychology, can be understood and applied a great deal more ease within the process of architectural design; it is here, at the intersection between these two differing fields, that a true understanding of the creation of place appears to be most needed. When gathering such information on both the significant qualities of places and the needs and perceptions of those who use them (or will do in the future), it is critical that we 'must obtain our accounts as carefully as possible and corroborate them by whatever means we have available' (Canter, 1977, p.48). The methods of uncovering conceptions of a setting are mere examples of how such information on place could be obtained – there are many other possibilities, and we must be careful to utilize the correct one; Canter, addressing significant questions regarding the conceptualisation of place, highlights the issue of 'whether certain aspects of conceptual systems are best

explored in one particular mode rather than another' (1977, p.125), and similarly, whether the participants in question are best suited to communicating their conceptions of place in a certain way (such as writers presumably being predisposed to producing a written or verbal description). Observing the level of consideration with which we must approach this method, he hypothesizes 'that the effectiveness of the eventual environmental modification will depend to a certain extent on whether the designer has effectively uncovered the appropriate conceptual system' (1977, p.125).

Canter's 1977 text outlines his proposed place theory in the beginnings of its development. Offered as a potential solution for the widespread sense of placelessness felt within the Western world, it was, and is, a proposal with a great deal of potential, and has proven an influential text for numerous other investigations; despite this, however, it does not appear to have been developed, tested, or adopted with regard to the translation of place-specific findings from within the field of environmental psychology into guidelines for architectural design (Bonnes & Secchiaroli, 1995).

### **3.2.1.1 Facet Theory**

Following this initial proposal, Canter furthered his research by incorporating facet theory<sup>17</sup> into his investigation, with the purpose of developing a 'detailed psychological theory that can be integrated into design' (1996, p.109). Despite sounding somewhat promising as a potential tool for use within this body of research, facet theory deals with socio-behavioural aspects within the social sciences, as opposed to the more relevant model proposed in *The Psychology of Place*, which relates more readily to spatio-physical (and therefore architectural) aspects of settings. Facet theory is, in addition, a scientific method based upon mathematical principles and rules written from the point of view of a non-designer, and appears to have been

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<sup>17</sup> [Drawing on the mathematical principles of set theory,] 'facet theory provides a framework [...] for formulating a definition and for relating that definition to empirical observations' (Dancer, 1990, pp.366-367).

<sup>18</sup> 'A means of describing the world in relation to a subject is through narrative. Narrative

developed under the false assumption that there is a common, systematic design process shared amongst all architects, an issue which will be further discussed at a subsequent point in this chapter.

Although offering several research possibilities worthy of further investigation and testing, the theory offered in *The Facets of Place* (1996) is of little relevance in this instance. Alongside the aforementioned reasons, the intent of this body of research is not to conduct a scientific, empirical study or to test Canter's place theory, but to develop and suggest an interdisciplinary method for the creation of environments conducive to attachment to place. Suggesting possible methods for identifying key constituents of place, Canter's original proposed model (1977) is both non-prescriptive and less suggestive of a disciplinary bias in terms of the technical nature of its outline, language, and method; as such (and in addition to being written with designers in mind), it is both easily relatable and in much clearer alignment with the creative practice of architectural design.

### **3.2.2 Kaplan's Attention Restoration Theory**

Echoing Canter (amongst many others), Kaplan (1983) notes that although there has been a notable increase in research into the relationship between people and environments, there has also been a distinct failure to translate related findings into the production of architecture congruent to the needs of people; in turn, this is perceived to result from the lack of instruction as to how such findings should be applied or interpreted. As highlighted in the previous chapter, Kaplan's Attention Restoration Theory (1995) identifies four environmental traits present in restorative settings (being away, extent, fascination and compatibility) against which such an environment could be measured, identified and, therefore, potentially created. Despite this (and following the popular trend within the field of environmental psychology that he himself has acknowledged), Kaplan's theory appears to have only be utilised and tested in evaluation of existing settings, with no clear



instructions or examples of how the findings may be applied within the discipline of architectural design. The following section of this chapter will refer to studies that utilize or have focused upon Kaplan's Attention Restoration Theory, providing a collated summary of the findings in relation to each of the four traits previously identified, in order to consider how and when they may be understood and integrated within this body of research.

### **3.2.2.1      *Being Away***

Unlike the other constructs of Kaplan's Attention Restoration Theory, being away is often 'a conceptual rather than a physical transformation' (Kaplan, 1995, p.173), signified by the distinct experience of being 'physically or mentally removed from the [everyday] activities that are attentionally demanding' or distracting (Oullette et al., 2005, p.176); in essence, the restorative environment – which, as has been previously noted, is commonly associated with natural settings such as the seaside or a forest- must offer a 'change of scenery' (Kaplan, 1983, p.327) and the opportunity to '[put] aside the work one ordinarily does' (Korpela, 2012, p.33). But, as he notes, one's sense of 'being away' does not necessarily have to take place in an unfamiliar or new setting; '[a] change in the direction of one's gaze, or even an old environment viewed in a new way can provide the necessary conceptual shift' (Kaplan, 1995, p.173). Neither is it a requirement for the given restorative setting to be situated far away from one's day to day environment; a location which can be reached without difficulty can prove to be equally beneficial, particularly for those in an urban environment where access to nature and natural conditions is perhaps not so readily available (Kaplan, 1995).

### **3.2.2.2      *Fascination***

Oullette et al. (2005, p.176) define fascination as being capable of 'facilitating involuntary attention by the intrinsic interest of the situation'. Such

engagement with (and understanding of) one's environment utilizes what James (1892) termed to be 'involuntary attention' (later renamed by Kaplan (1995) as fascination), allowing regeneration of one's capacity for directed attention (Korpela et al., 2001). Fascination is a multifaceted construct, and has been noted to arise from process, such as the curiosity evoked for some during the observation of unfamiliar animals, or the process of '[p]redicting despite uncertainty' (Kaplan, 1995, p.172); it is also commonly associated with content, such as intriguing physical features of a setting (e.g. historical ruins), or objects found within it, for example. Kaplan (1993, 1995) identified two opposing types of fascination, between which all instances of this response fall; 'hard' fascination, such as spectating at motor sports, and 'soft' fascination, which might occur as the result of time spent experiencing aspects of a peaceful and calming natural environment, such as the movement of trees in the wind, patterns of light, clouds, and sunrises (Korpela, 2012, p.33). The latter of these two types, soft fascination, is more commonly experienced within natural settings, where such captivating processes occur naturally, and has been noted to provide significantly wider scope for personal reflection to occur, which in turn allows favourable circumstances for the restoration of one's directed attention capacity (Kaplan, 1993, 1995, 2001).

Despite being an essential feature of restorative experience, the occurrence of fascination does not necessarily ensure the recovery of directed attention; like the other constructs suggested by Kaplan, although integral, it must be considered both individually and within the broader context of Attention Restoration Theory (Kaplan, 1978, 1995; Kaplan & Talbot, 1983). An environment rich in fascination must also have a relatively high level of order and coherence, and be able to be experienced as a 'unified entity' (S. Kaplan, 2001, p.488); without this, it is extremely likely that confusion and distraction will occur, further depleting one's resources and lessening the opportunity for (and strength of) attachment to place (Kaplan, 1983).

### **3.2.2.3      *Extent***

Extent involves ‘giving one the sense of being somewhere with sufficient scope that one can dwell there for a while, whether or not the physical place is vast’ (Oullette et al., 2005, p.176). It must ‘constitute a whole other world’ (Kaplan, 1995, p.174) through having enough capacity and physical comprehensibility to maintain an engagement with one’s mind whilst simultaneously encouraging exploration, whether mental or physical (Kaplan, 2001, Korpela et al, 2001). Despite it being suggestive of a large area of ground, extent can also be felt or evoked in small pockets of land within a restorative environment. Kaplan (1995) highlights that actions such as the careful design of footpaths and tracks, and creating a sense of miniaturization (both of which are often features of Japanese gardens) could help create the illusion of extent. On a less literal level, extent can also be felt as ‘a promise of continuation of the world beyond what is immediately perceived; as a sense that there might be more to explore than is immediately evident’ (Korpela, 2012, p.33), through miniaturization or the presence of historic features or references, for example.

### **3.2.2.4      *Compatibility***

As Kaplan (1983, p. 327) observes, environments conducive to attachment must have the inherent capability of assisting a person in ‘the pursuit of [their] inclinations – not just of [their] purposes’, supporting (in short) ‘activities that are intrinsically enjoyable’ whilst appropriately meeting and encouraging the needs of the individual (Oullette et al., 2005; Kaplan, 2001). Discussing the nature of restorative experience in such environments, Oullette et al. (2005) observe that the degree of compatibility between a person and their environment is proportionate to the likelihood of the individual making return visits to the place, implying that it is therefore likely to be deeply connected to the formation of attachment bonds. Similarly, an increased level of compatibility permits a greater degree of personal

reflection (Korpela, 2012). Kaplan (1995, p.174) notes compatibility to be a reciprocal dialogue between person and place:

‘[o]n the one hand, a compatible environment is one where one’s purposes fit what the environment demands. At the same time the environment must provide the information needed to meet one’s purposes’.

As a hypothetical example, Kaplan (2001, p.488) observes that ‘an environment that forces one to do what one does not want to or that prevents one from doing what one intends is a major source of incompatibility’; one’s actions within a restorative environment should occur naturally and without considered mental effort (Kaplan, 1983).

In discussing the suitability of a setting to one’s purposes (and vice versa), Kaplan (1995, p.172) proposes that the needs and aspirations of an individual are more easily met and accomplished ‘when one has useful feedback from the environment’, proceeding to state that ‘[a]n environment that is compatible will thus be a responsive environment’. It is to be expected that the purposes and needs of people are, on the whole, greatly diverse; unsurprisingly, it is therefore impossible for an environment to be adequately compatible to such a wide range of needs (Kaplan, 1995). Achieving one’s purposes with regard to a particular environment commonly requires a degree of problem solving, which in turn requires the individual to be consciously selective – something which is critical during the process of directed attention. As a result, ‘[a]n ambiguous or distracting environment raises many irrelevant possibilities, placing more demand on directed attention’ (Kaplan, 1995, p.172), unlike a restorative environment, which does the opposite. Similarly, an environment that does not readily offer the relevant qualities or information to meet the needs or aspirations of an individual is increasingly unlikely to be considered as compatible (S. Kaplan, 1983).

As Cawte (1967), Kaplan (1995), and Sacks (1987) note, nature and natural connections are widely regarded to provide a high level of compatibility; for

some reason, despite being generally more familiar with ‘civilized’ settings (Kaplan, 1995, p.174), the degree of effort required to function and to carry out appropriate actions in a natural setting is considered to be notably less. Kaplan (1995) proceeds to note that an individual often visits a natural setting with the intention of carrying out a particular activity (such as sailing, climbing or bird watching), in the knowledge that the environment already possesses what is required; as a result, the level of compatibility between the two is greatly increased even before the person arrives.

Kaplan’s theory has been selected from the previous chapter as a key element within this body of research for two primary reasons. Firstly, the degree to which his highly-regarded hypothesis has been researched and tested lends a great deal of validity to the resulting findings; and secondly, as has been observed, Attention Restoration Theory non-prescriptively outlines qualities directly linked to the general physical environment (Kaplan, 1995; Staats & Hartig, 2004), providing scope for speculation that related findings could be interpretable in relation to the design of space and place. The problem, however, is that unlike Canter’s model, no method or procedure is offered for the transference of Kaplan’s theory or its related findings from environmental psychology to architectural design, despite its prominence; application of this theory would be reliant on the interpretation and projections of the architect, risking misinterpretation both of theory and of the true needs of eventual users in relation to a specific environment due to ‘their differing experiences [giving] rise to differing perspectives’ (Canter, 1977, p.4). To this end, it seems somewhat irresponsible to use or rely upon Kaplan’s Attention Restoration Theory in architectural design without the presence of guiding principles to suggest a suitable method of application.

The aforementioned theories of Canter and Kaplan are similar in that both share a common focus on environmental qualities and their psychological impact on people, and are concerned (to varying degrees - the emphasis of the latter being primarily on restorative environments, to which attachments are commonly formed) with the potential creation of place. Using Canter’s

model for initial guidance, this body of research will look to uncover key characteristics and physical attributes of a particular environmental context which, once identified, may be able to be linked together as an example of how to form a broader, more cohesive picture of the definition of place in that instance. Through considering the attributes connecting people's responses to place in relation to Kaplan's four categories of characteristics typical to restorative environments, it appears (on paper at least) that it would be possible for a stronger link between these theories to be established. This body of work will begin to explore this possibility.

### **3.3 *Between Objectivity and Subjectivity: Highlighting a Geographical Approach to Place***

The first chapter highlighted the impact of modernism on the sense of placelessness that exists throughout the Western world; despite the globalized nature of contemporary culture and our heightened awareness of 'the fundamental polarity of human consciousness' (Entrikin, 1991, p.1), 'a revitalized sensitivity to place' is experienced by many (Casey, 1997, p.xiii). Rooted in modernism, our faith in scientific advances and the generation of universal theory has played a significant role in our sense of detachment from place, overlooking and underestimating the intrigue of the particular on a quest to uncover the generic (Seidman, 1983). Outlining the response of the geographer to such polarity, Entrikin (1991, p.5) notes:

'[t]o understand place requires that we have access to both an objective and subjective reality. From the decentred vantage point of the theoretical scientist, place becomes either location or a set of generic relations and thereby loses much of its significance for human action. From the centred viewpoint of the subject, place has meaning only in relation to an individual's or a group's goals and concerns. Place is best viewed from points in between'.

Occupying the interstitial ground between objective and subjective (and encouraging 'narrative-like synthesis'<sup>18</sup> as a means to assist mediation

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<sup>18</sup> 'A means of describing the world in relation to a subject is through narrative. Narrative understanding has been characterised as a way of "seeing things together." It has been

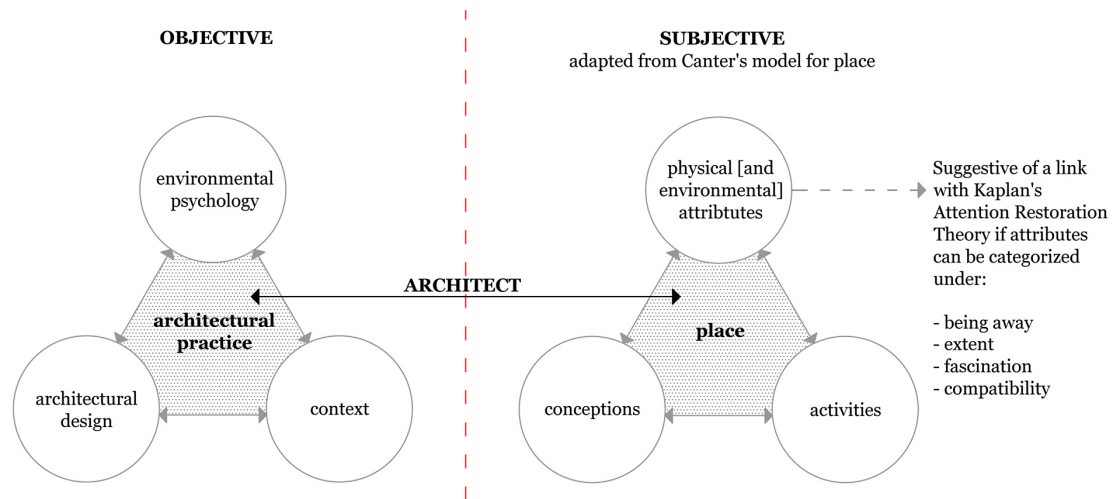
between the two), such a stance enables ‘an understanding of place as the context of human actions and events’ (p.26). Whilst it is outside the scope of this research to discuss geography in relation to place and environmental psychology in any depth, it has been briefly highlighted due to the support it lends to the stance of the author (and, therefore, the architect) within the context of this research; here, the intended role of both is to be located between universal, scientific theory and the specific intricacies of a particular context, acting as a conduit through which the dialogue between the two can be explored in the development of a strategy for place (see Figure 3.2).

Canter (1977), unlike the vast majority of his peers (Kaplan included), promotes a theoretical approach which is both strongly subjective and site-specific, based solely around uncovering the essence of a specific place through the unguided responses of people to that environment; his tripartite model aside, given what we have read about both our contemporary architectural condition and our widespread thirst for universal theories (Entrikin, 1991; Seidman, 1983), it seems highly unlikely that merely interpreting generalized findings from environmental psychology in relation to architectural design - reliant on the projections and assumptions of the architect - would lead to anything but a highly objective response.

The architect, in his or her interstitial role - responsible for the dialogue between architectural practice and the creation of place - should mediate between the objective and the subjective through a haptic and reflective approach (which will be further discussed shortly); through a ‘narrative-like synthesis’ (Entrikin, 1991, p.26) which draws upon relevant cultural influence and personal place imagery, the architect will then be able to explore and consider both their personal response and the conceptions of others in the development of an appropriate and place-responsive architecture.

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described as a distinct form of knowing that derives from the redescription of experience in terms of a synthesis of heterogeneous phenomena. In one of its simplest forms the narrative has two components, the story and the storyteller. Narratives are by definition told from the point of view of a subject or subjects.’ (Entrikin, 1991, p.23)



**Figure 3.2** A Strategy for Place

### 3.4 Methodology

This section will summarize existing models of the relationship between research and design, in order to outline, substantiate and select a method by which the theories of both Canter (1977) and Kaplan (1995) can be integrated into the field of architectural design. Following this, a brief review of the literature on the process of design will be carried out, in order to ascertain to what degree the stages of the design process could potentially be predicted or defined in relation to the outcome of this research.

#### 3.4.1 Research and Design

Recent years have seen the emergence and development of design as a key component within research in many creative disciplines, including architecture. Both acknowledging and seeking to clarify the complexity of the relationship between research and design, Christopher Frayling (1993), in his much-cited paper *Research and Art in Design*, proposes a tripartite model of terms (consisting of *into*, *for* and *through*) to describe the manners in which the two could be linked. *Into* considers design in terms of both theory and history, and could, for example, include expansion of academic knowledge



through theoretical and historical explications; *for* generally denotes research that is carried out with application in a particular design application or function, such as the material or technological development as a response to the recognized needs of a sector; and finally, *through* design – applicable to this body of research – regards the methodology to be intertwined or constituted by the process of design and creation. Such practice-led research can be centred on either process or product, in either the realities of architectural practice or in the conceptual designs of academia (Frayling, 1993; Rendell, 2004, p.143-144). As Rendell (2004, p.145) notes:

‘[i]n architectural design research such work can take the form of installations [including exhibitions and artefacts (2004, p.144)], drawings and texts, as well as buildings – or even parts of buildings – or aspects of the design process. Architectural representations may describe spaces with the intention that they will be realised in built-form, or they can propose architectural projects that are unrealisable, which explore and critique the paradigms of knowledge held within the architectural profession and construction industry that underlie the production of the built environment itself’.

Agreeing that strengthening of the relationship between academic research and architectural practice would allow the former to ‘act as an incubator for innovations in architectural design that will improve the quality of the built environment’ (Rendell, 2004, p.146), Montague (2011) notes there to be a significant lack of literature which addresses design research methodologies. Following a review of available related material, she identifies four primary methodological categories that describe the relationship between research and design – *quasi-scientific* (Coyne, 2006), *creative practice* (Forsyth, 2011), *speculation* (Cairns, 2012) and *reflection* (Schön, 1983).

The first of these, *quasi-scientific*, is derived from scientific method. Testing a theoretical hypothesis through the employment of design in data production, this methodology is driven by product, not process, with the data output measured against pre-agreed theoretical criteria, following which a conclusion is reached (Coyne, 2006). Due to the nature of this method and the requirement for objectivity in analysis, the researcher could not occupy both the role of designer and evaluator, and as such would be reliant on the

participation of a third party (Montague, 2011, p.6).

In comparison, *creative practice* – which has its roots in artistic fields – permits the sequential development of both design (which, for example, may take the form of an installation, painting or sculpture) and text (both theoretical and analytical), where the researcher is responsible for not only design and analysis, but also the constant consultation and reciprocal response between the two (Forsyth, 2011).

In the first of two commonly acknowledged methods of speculative design research, *speculation*, research aims and questions are established before the response of speculative design interventions determines the ensuing theoretical debate and direction (Montague, 2011, p.8, citing Cairns, 2012). Often this reciprocal response is repeated several times throughout the research investigation, with the researcher again holding a central role in both design and analysis. Alternatively, the investigation may begin by outlining a theoretical context before a speculative design proposal or output concludes the research as an example of how the theory *could* be interpreted.

Finally, *reflection*, which Schön (1983, p.68) states

‘allows [the researcher] to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation which he finds uncertain or unique. He reflects on the phenomenon before him, and on the prior understandings which have been implicit in his behavior. He carries out an experiment which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomenon and a change in the situation. When someone reflects in action, he becomes a researcher in the practice context. He is not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case’.

In terms of integrating research and design, this approach (also known as *reflection-in-action* (Schön (1983))) centralizes process rather than product in the investigative output, with design developing as a response to a particular theoretical context. The researcher – who is responsible for both design and analysis – clearly identifies and describes the creative process before proceeding to reflect upon and analyse not only the output, but also the complete body of research and the relationships and connections between the

two (Schön, 1983; Montague, 2011).

Emerging as undoubtedly the most appropriate method of the four with respect to this body of research, the author has, in this instance, opted to adopt a reflective approach to research by design. There are three key reasons for this - firstly, it is critical to the nature and aims of this research that a method is selected where process (rather than product) is central; secondly, that the creative output develops as a response to a theoretical context established at an earlier stage in the research; and thirdly, that the researcher is able to occupy a role which is both design-based and reflexive/reflective. 'Within this model', Montague (2011, p.11) states, 'the researcher/designer occupies a central role and therefore has an opportunity to reflect on the design process relative to the external context and explicit and implicit theoretical influences.'

### **3.4.2 *The Process of Architectural Design***

Emerging as a legacy of modernism, with the widespread detachment from place within the Western world came, predictably, a detachment from the process of architectural design. As has been noted in the first chapter, the Industrial Revolution brought with it an advancement of technology and materials and an obsession with the new, which in turn saw a detachment from craft. As a result of this new found faith in technology, the design process changed from being a result of the craftsman's cautious and conscious planning to being an acknowledgement of the broader (and rapidly changing) cultural context that design has been practiced in ever since (Alexander, 1964; Lawson, 2005). This separation of designing from making resulted in what is becoming an increasingly distinct distance between the architect and the construction site; as Pallasmaa (2005, p.65) observes, 'the increasing specialisation and division of labour within the architectural practice [...] has fragmented the traditional entity of the architect's self-identity, working process, and end result'. Such prolonged separation

between architecture and construction (and design and craft) has had a widespread effect on not only the skills sets but also the values held within the field.

There are several pieces of literature (see Maver (1970)) that falsely assume that the numerous stages of the architectural design process are not only sequential and predictable, but are able to be identified and mapped accordingly. Based upon conjecture and opinion rather than observation and experience, such work neglects to acknowledge that divergent and unique conditions of each design problem. With regard to the generation of architectural design, Lawson notes there to be no predictable sequence of occurrence, or start and end points; with this, he warns against attempts to reduce the design process to a logical map, stating that

‘any visually understandable diagram is far too much of a simplification of what is clearly a highly complex [and often individual] mental process’. (2005, p.48)

It is clear that there are numerous - perhaps even endless – possible paths within the process of design; the individuality of the design problem coupled with the individuality of the designer(s) involved (in terms of personal, academic, and professional background) makes mapping a predictable and accurate process impossible and irresponsible.

Canter (1977, p.81) acknowledges there to be a comparable quest for ‘golden rules’ and “magical” formulae’ connecting the physical aspects of the environment with the psychological reaction of the inhabitant. Highlighting why this is similarly unachievable, he notes that, by nature, a person’s mental perceptions of place are only relevant and particular to the context in question; elaborating, he proceeds:

‘although we can draw out generalities about the structure of these systems and how they operate, unless we choose a particular situation we will be unable to specify the details of the content of the system and hence the physical components which are part of it’.

In the absence of ‘golden rules’, and in order that environmental aspects of particular importance can be uncovered, clear and accessible procedures (of

which his earlier tripartite model is an example) must be made readily available to the designer (Canter, 1997, p.182). Given that a key task of the designer should surely be to acknowledge and understand the true nature and context of the design task(s) at hand and to adopt a fitting design process in return (Lawson, 2005, p.48), it is not the role of the environmental psychologist to advise on the nature and appearance of the physical form; instead, as Canter (1977, p.182) suggests, they should

‘supply [the designers] with measuring instruments which will enable them to work effectively with the people who will be using that physical form, and consequently enable them all to know when they have achieved the best they can in that context’.

In addition, their interest in the relationship between people and place also tends to have a different focus; as was highlighted in the previous chapter, whereas those from an architectural background tend to be more concerned with the physical features and conditions of a setting, social scientists tend to view a physical environment solely as a vessel for social and behavioural interactions (Gieryn, 2000; Gustafson, 2006; Fried, 1984).

The first chapter of this research identified four key tensions that have developed as a legacy of modernism and are linked together by a prominent central theme - the dominance of the ocular bias within the field of architecture. Particularly central to our detachment from methods of representation and communication, this visual bias is distinctly evident within the acts of architectural design, where computer drawing and rendering has largely replaced the haptic processes of designing and making by hand (Turtle, 1995). As has been noted, hand sketching or modelling in the early stages of design can produce what Sennett (2008, p.40) termed ‘pictures of possibility’, which may encourage clarity or development of both thought and process. Sennett’s observations clearly echo those of Schön (1983), who (in a discussion of the reflective approach to design) noted not only the potential for conversation between such representations and their designers, but also the pivotal role of the drawing in the thought process. Such conversations have been acknowledged as incredibly latent, holding a

great deal of potential for the ‘unexpected discovery’ (Schön and Wiggins (1992)) of influence and interpretation that the designer did not realize existed; the process of creating computerized representations and drawings, although undoubtedly useful and time-saving (and often necessary), is acknowledged to be considerably less haptic and increasingly detached from the reality of what is being drawn, and does not contain the same ability for conversation and reflection (Lawson, 2005).

The practice-based element of this research neither follows nor prescribes a singular set of design ‘golden rules’ (Canter, 1977, p.181), instead following the aforementioned strategy for place that outlines the role of the architect. Encouraging drawing and making as tools for generating dialogue, it employs a reflective approach in the quest to uncover environmental attributes that identify place within a particular context.

### **3.4.3 *The Architect and Place Imagery***

Korpela (2012, p.53) suggests that architects should endeavour to uncover favourite places (to which, by their very nature, attachments are formed) within ‘emotionally loaded’ environments in order ‘to convince financiers of the necessity of [these kinds] of places’; in further support of the work of Canter (e.g. 1977, 1992), he posits that ‘[t]he actual outlook or design guidelines [for these future places] cannot be derived from the present, psychological results’ - presumably due to the vast majority of such studies being carried out in a laboratory setting, far removed from the physical and experiential reality of the environments being studied (Canter, 1986). As an alternative response, he highlights the work of Downing (1992a, 1992b, 1992c), who hypothesizes and demonstrates ‘that an architectural designer’s place imagery, stored in what this study defines as an image bank, exists as basic building blocks for positing the semblance of future places’ (1992a, p.441).

A place image is, in essence, a memory (emotional, physical, or experiential) of a particular setting, and can encompass both an understanding of space and a sense of meaning (Downing, 1992a, p.442). Collectively, these notable and striking memories - reflective of sensory experience of place - are stored in the 'image bank' of an individual. Immediately comparable to 'the affective link' between person and place that Hernández et al. (2007, p.310) describe, place images are, without question, demonstrative of personal attachment (and, therefore, place identity<sup>19</sup>). In addition to prompting thoughts of previous encounters of space (encountered either prior to or following an individual beginning higher education, and categorized as informal and formal respectively<sup>20</sup> (Downing, 1992a, pp.442-443)) they also provide food for thought with regard to places that have yet to be designed (Ahsen, 1984; Marks, 1983).

These select mental images relate to sensory qualities of the environment, connected through human experience to personal emotions, ideas, opinions, and thoughts. Stored within the mind of the designer until they are somehow requested for use or reference, by allowing memories of past situations and events to influence or make sense of current and future experiences, they permit the bridging of time during the process of architectural design<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> As highlighted in the previous chapter, Proshansky et al. (1983, p.59) suggest (in a statement which is notably similar) that place identity develops in response to personal cognitions of place: '[t]hese cognitions are memories, ideas, feelings, attitudes, values, preferences, meanings, and conceptions of behaviour and experience which relate to the variety and complexity of physical settings that define the day-to-day existence of every human being. At the core of such physical environment-related cognitions is the 'environmental past' of the person; a past consisting of places, spaces and their properties which have served instrumentally in the satisfaction of the person's biological, psychological, social, and cultural needs'.

<sup>20</sup> 'It was assumed that the memorable places encountered by the individual as a youth (before entering professional education) were primarily informal in nature. In general, most of these memorable places could be characterized as indicative of popular, common, or vernacular settings rather than what might be considered "designed" or "high" architecture. Informal place images contain a large measure of memorable experience surrounding events and occasions spent within the setting in addition to spatial knowledge [...]. During their years of education, young designers tend to shift their memorable imagery from common the more formal place imagery - that is, places that are formally recognized as examples of various periods of architectural development or "designed" places introduced through coursework or published architecture'. (Downing, 1992a, p.443)

<sup>21</sup> 'It has been found that professional designers relate abstract formal principles to images of actual places from their own experience more frequently than design students' (Downing,

(Darke, 1978; Downing, 1992a, p.422; Downing & Hubka, 1979; Gordon, 1972).

Despite the theorizing surrounding such ‘design conjectures’ (Downing, 1992a, p.442) and the role of the mental image in the creation of place (see Darke, 1978; Hillier, Musgrove, & O’Sullivan, 1972; Schon, 1983; Stevens, 1990 for examples), there has been a widespread failure to confront or investigate either in any depth with regard to architectural design education or theory<sup>22</sup>. However, Cooper-Marcus (1990, pp.127-128) observes a small number of American design schools who are bucking this trend and employed environmental autobiographies within the architectural studio; relaying memories and narrative descriptions of an individual’s favourite places, these autobiographies are employed to raise personal awareness of significant experiences and settings in order that their influence on design solutions may be recognized and more consciously considered. Given the recognized connection between place attachment, restorative environments and the regulation of emotion and self, it has been contended that connected place images could, therefore, be explored as potential predictors and resources with regard to the creation of place (Bishop and Hull, 1991).

Process-driven, the creative element of this body of research will consider the potential of the architect’s place memory and ‘environmental past’ (Proshansky et al., 1983, p.59) in aiding the identification of significant environmental attributes and in mediating between the subjective and the objective; what will be encouraged is the pursuit of an architecture which is sympathetic and responsive to the needs of its users, based on honest experience rather than inaccurate projections, and capable of offering a recovery from the sense detachment to place that is perpetuated by contemporary architectural practice in the Western world. Prior to a discussion and analysis of the author’s practical work, the following chapter

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1992b). One reason for this is, according to Downing (1992b, p.77), that design education does not particularly encourage the cultivation of personal experiences.’ (Korpela, 2012, p.53)

<sup>22</sup> Similarly, it has received relatively little attention within the field of psychology, where the ‘complexities of imagination’ are overlooked in favour of the ‘debate [surrounding] the function and characteristics of mental imagery’ (Downing, 1992a, p.447).



will reveal and discuss important and influential aspects of its cultural context.

*Despite increased interest in the relationship between people and environments, there has been a significant failure to interpret relevant theories from environmental psychology into an architectural tool that could aid the creation of places rich in opportunity for attachment. Offering a tripartite model through which the actions and conceptions of people in relation to a particular setting could be identified and understood, Canter suggests a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach to understanding and creating place. Written with environmental designers (rather than psychologists) in mind, the potential role and application of Canter's approach could be easily understood and interpreted in relation to architectural design. In contrast, Kaplan's highly regarded Attention Restoration Theory (1995), although outlining characteristics of experience and environment which may ultimately be conducive to attachment, does not provide an indication of how related findings may be applied or interpreted in architectural design; through hypothetically linking the four characteristics associated with restorative environments with Canter's model, this research looks to unite these two theories in support of each other and in the strengthening of a general creative strategy for place.*

*Focusing on process over product whilst allowing the researcher to hold a central role in the development of both a design proposal and a theoretical context to which it responds, a reflective methodology will be adopted in the analysis of responses to a specific context (to be revealed in the following chapters); addressing the ocular bias of architecture, the resultant strategy for place aims to reconnect the architect with place and context through employing personal memory and haptic methods, mediating between the subjective conceptions of others and the often objective approach to the practice of architecture.*

## 4 Context

*As was outlined in the previous chapter, a central aim of this research is to explore how place-related theories from environmental psychology may be translated and applied (via a generalized strategy) in relation to architectural design through the development of a context-specific creative investigation; however, in order that the interpretation and application of these theoretical procedures can be illustrated and explained appropriately, it is critical that the background of the design task in question is first discussed.*

*This chapter will open with a brief introduction to Lybster, Caithness, revealing (through a personal, first-person account) both its role in the praxis element of this body of research and the reasoning behind its selection as the locus of study; summarizing notable points in the history of the village, the growth and decline of its importance as a herring port will be charted, before the extent of the creative impact resulting from its unique context is outlined and considered in relation to the theoretical context of this thesis.*

*An incontestable example when discussing the influence of Caithness on creativity, selected works by Neil M. Gunn (namely ‘The Atom of Delight’ and ‘The Silver Darlings’) will be highlighted, before the chapter closes by discussing North Lands Creative Glass - an internationally renowned glass school established in Lybster in the mid 1990s. Attracting a significant number of visiting artists to the area each year, with North Lands’ continued growth in both popularity and reputation has come the need for further expansion of the existing facilities; in turn, this has led to the emergence of an exciting and intriguing design brief, the relevance of which in relation to this body of research will become apparent.*

#### 4.1 **Lybster, Caithness.**

'You may dream of lands across the sea, where skies are ever blue,  
Of tropic lands with golden sands and birds of every hue,  
But there's one spot among the lot, surpassing them always,  
The place that's fairest of them all is Lybster's bonnie braes.

To walk down by the Reisgill burn through hazel, whin and broom,  
By shaded pools, so calm and cool, 'mongst nature's wild perfume,  
Hear waterfalls and song birds calls, hark to their joyful lays,  
The sweetest music can be heard round Lybster's bonnie braes.

Down by the shore there's peace in store and scenes of pure delight.  
See banks of primrose wild and gay, watch boats sail out at night.  
Hear lapping waves in echoing caves, watch rocks dance through heat haze,  
From up above the fern-clad slopes of Lybster's bonnie braes.

To Shelligoe I bid you go and there I know you'll find,  
A sheltered spot below the rock, with waters mild and kind,  
Meet happy folks on grassy slopes and bathe down in the bay,  
Or rest contented in the beach, 'neath Lybster's bonnie braes.

So if you dream of distant lands, then may you bear in mind,  
Where're you roam you can't beat home, where folks are true and kind.  
So may you find, sweet peace of mind, contentment all your days  
Around about the lovely banks of Lybster's bonnie braes'.

(Young (1967) in Young, 1998, p.523)

Like Young, I was brought up in Lybster, a small fishing village on the east coast of Caithness, in the Highlands of Scotland (Figures 4.1 and 4.2); the genealogy of my paternal family – who continue to live in and around the village - can be traced back within the area through the last four hundred years or so. I lived there from when I was born until I moved to Edinburgh to study in 2002, with trips home becoming increasingly more frequent and lengthy during my time as a postgraduate; in December 2011, with the intention of completing this thesis and undertaking some freelance design projects, I made the decision to temporarily relocate to Lybster.

Although it has become increasingly more apparent over recent years, I was not always conscious of my sense of attachment to Lybster. In my final period as a high school student I was desperate to leave and go to university; neither Lybster nor Caithness held much in the way of opportunities or interest with regard to a career or life in general - my ambitions for both were much greater

than what I felt was on offer. But with the progression of my architectural education came a growing interest in environmental psychology, and the realization that my approach as an architectural designer had been greatly influenced by my experience and memories of the environment I had grown up in; curiosity suitably sparked, it was immediately apparent when the opportunity subsequently arose to undertake this research degree that the topic of place and place attachment would be central to my work.



**Figure 4.1** Map of Scotland, indicating the location of Lybster.



**Figure 4.2** Lybster Harbour and village, as seen from Swiney Hill and Reisgill burn

Young's poem 'Lybster's Bonnie Braes' is one of many pieces of text that tells of an attachment to the village and the surrounding area. Born and raised in the village, in the latter stages of his life Young published two volumes (1998, 2002) on Lybster's history, culture and environment – demonstrating not only the scale of his own attachment to place, but also the remarkable depth of knowledge and volume of cultural documentation available in such a rural area. Largely factual accounts ranging from the beginnings of Lybster to its existence at the turn of the twenty-first century, the broad range of topics covered include the history of the village in relation to local story and verse, religion, social change and, most importantly, the fishing industry with which Lybster's name is synonymous.

A thriving fishing harbour during the herring boom of the early 19th century, by 1817 Lybster (having only been founded some fifteen years previous) had become so prosperous that it became the designated station for the Fishery Office of Latheron Parish. Flourishing further, by 1833 it was recognized to be the third largest Scottish herring port behind the considerably larger settlements of Wick and Fraserburgh, with 300 boats fishing out of the harbour at its zenith in 1856 (Young, 1998, 2002) (Figure 4.3) - a remarkable achievement for such a small settlement.



**Figure 4.3** Lybster harbour towards the height of the herring boom (Anon., ca. 1830)

Somewhat inevitably, with this prosperity came increased wealth and larger boats, for which the small harbour was inadequate; at the beginning of the twentieth century, coupled with a decline in stocks, the presence of boats and the volume of fish being landed and cured in the port began a significant decline from which there never a recovery.

Today, Lybster continues to have a population of approximately five hundred people, and although it has remained active, there are now just over a dozen boats fishing out of the harbour. Whilst there is now relatively little evidence of the industrious past of the village, subtle clues remain, such as the ruined and derelict buildings on the banks of the inlet (Figure 4.4), the heritage centre in the former smokehouse and harbour store (Figure 4.5), and the unusually wide main street where the local regiment was drilled and where the fish market was once held (Figure 4.6).





**Figure 4.4**      Former cooperage, Lybster harbour



**Figure 4.5** Smokehouse and harbour store, Lybster harbour (now Waterlines Heritage Centre and Cafe) (Hume, J.R., 1974)





**Figure 4.6** Lybster Main Street, looking south (Bowman, 2004)

The development of Lybster – along one primary, central street that lies across the A99 to Wick - was commensurate with its status as a herring port. The southernmost section of the village (closest to Inver Shore – which later was to become known as Lybster harbour) was constructed first, with the northernmost portion quickly following in later years; between 1802, when it was founded, and 1830 (by which point the herring industry had begun to rapidly develop but had not yet reached its peak), the village had grown from next to nothing to have 86 buildings flanking the main street (Young, 1998, p.4). Whilst many of these buildings were used solely as dwellings, several also contained shops or workshops. As Young (1998, pp.394-400) notes, by the height of the fishing industry in the 1850s (by which point Lybster would have comprised over 100 buildings and a population of at least 500), the village contained a vast array of shops as businesses; at this time he records there to have been: three butchers, two bakers, five tailors, a newsagents and bookshop, several inns, a tearoom, a bank, a saddler, three general merchants, a draper, a shoemaker, a grocer, a watchmaker, a chemist, a

blacksmith, and a mason – all in addition to the fishcurers, netmakers, boatbuilders and ironmonger who were essential to the fishing industry. Predictably, with the decline in activity in the port came a decline in general prosperity and need with regard to many of these services; often family run, over the century that followed many local businesses gradually ceased to trade, with many remaining family members seeking work elsewhere following the retirement or death of the owners. By the 1980s the arrival of supermarkets in Wick (the nearest town, fourteen miles to the north of Lybster) had seen another dramatic decline in independent and local shops, with only five (two butchers, two grocers, and a newsagents) remaining in operation in Lybster by 1998 (Young, 1998, p.400). With three of these having since closed due to retirement, today only the newsagents, one grocer and two hotels/public houses remain, with the majority of those who live in the village working and shopping elsewhere.

Although significantly quieter in terms of industry and activity, the population of Lybster has remained steady, with the community continuing to take a quiet pride in the history of the village and its surrounding context. Superstitions and stories, particularly those connected to the sea, continue to be passed down through the generations and retold to interested visitors; with there being no remaining living individuals who experienced first-hand the fishing boom in Lybster, much of this oral history would no doubt have been lost had it not been for those keen historians and storytellers such as Young.

As will be discussed further in the remainder of this chapter, the historical, cultural, and environmental context of Lybster and its locality has been influential to both local inhabitants and visitors, becoming apparent in the work of many writers and artists, including Neil M. Gunn – a ‘central figure of the Scottish Literary Renaissance’ (British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), 2004). Born in Dunbeath, just 9 miles south of Lybster, Gunn is widely recognized as ‘the most important Scottish novelist of the early twentieth century’, with his ability to apprehend and share the essence of Highland life far surpassing that of other writers (BBC, 2004).

#### **4.2 Neil M. Gunn and the Search for ‘The Atom of Delight’**

Over the course of his life, Neil Gunn published twenty novels. As his nephew Diarmid Gunn (n.d.) notes, pivotal to each is the quest for ‘wholeness, integration, delight or, simply, self’. Gunn<sup>23</sup> saw a rich vein of symbolic and philosophical meaning in the actuality and truth of the everyday in the Scottish Highlands, and drew inspiration from this in his writing. His final book, *The Atom of Delight* (1956), is semi-autobiographical - rather than writing an entirely factual account of his own life, Gunn, for the majority of the book, employs the central character of ‘the boy’, relaying metaphysical, contemplative tales of ‘circumstances and things that shaped a life’ (Gunn, D., n.d.). Having made a powerful impact upon Gunn, several of these locations and related experiences (which are immediately comparable to restorative environments and self-regulation respectively) appeared in previous tales and books, as will be illustrated and discussed.

Sharing with the reader his memories of exploring as a boy, Gunn tells us of how he would escape the ‘mental complexities’ of everyday life by going to Dunbeath Strath (a narrow, shallow valley, in the middle of which flows Dunbeath River - see Figures 4.7 and 4.8), where body and mind would be able to ‘drop the shackles and run’ (1956, p.24); it is both widely known and evident from his writing that Gunn had a great fondness for the Strath, with key characters (which, speculatively, may have been based on Gunn himself) often returning there, to a restorative environment, when faced with difficulties and the need to reflect.

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<sup>23</sup> To avoid confusion, it should be noted that the direct citation of the surname ‘Gunn’ within this text refers to the writer Neil Miller Gunn, unless otherwise indicated.



**Figure 4.7** Looking down into Dunbeath Strath from Houstry



**Figure 4.8** Dunbeath River

Rich in sensory experience, his memories of the Strath are easily paired with the four categories of environmental attributes identified by Kaplan (and discussed in greater depth in the previous chapter); Gunn - in this natural setting - has a sense of *being away* from what is ‘attentionally demanding’ (Oullette et al., 2005, p.176) in his everyday life; characteristically, the Strath provides *extent* - it ‘can be encompassed on foot yet is extensive or “far off”

enough never to be exhausted in interest' (Gunn, 1956, p.24); having been there countless times before, he knows that the Strath is rich in *compatibility* with regard to his needs, whether he is looking for solitude and reflection, or adventure and excitement; and finally, the richness of the natural environment of the Strath is such that is capable of holding one's attention effortlessly and facilitating 'involuntary attention' (Oulette et. al, 1995, p.176):

'[i]t would be difficult even to make a list of individual attractions, for any one item had in the matter of place, quantity and quality a very intricate pattern, so that within a given or general attraction there were particular attractions, and for us, ah! it was the particular that mattered'. (Gunn, 1956, p.24)

As was acknowledged during the literature review, restorative experiences are commonly recognised to contain inherent potential with regard to the process of self-regulation (Korpela et al., 2001); encouraging calmness and reflection on oneself, an improvement in mood and emotional state (alongside a heightened sense of personal capabilities and potential) can be achieved through the renewal of one's capacity for directed attention in a restorative environment.

Describing the metaphorical atom after which his book is titled, Gunn (1956, p.13) explains that it is '[t]he moment of happiness in life which comes not to order but unexpectedly'. Seeking to communicate the significance and quality of this rare, elusive moment (whilst also highlighting the difficulty in defining it precisely), he encourages the reader to imagine the sound of a musical note against a completely silent backdrop:

'[T]he sudden note of music does something to the silence of which one had become unaware; it arrests the silence, brings awareness of it, and by doing so defines it for the listening ear. It is an insight into the silence. It cleanses the moment, and through the clarity one's listening ascends with the overtones, while one's being remains at the centre of the experience [...]. [T]he insight is into something more than the silence, it is an apprehension of other factors, [and] is a moment of simple experience that happens to everyone'. (Gunn, 1956, p.13)

Just as Gunn's previously discussed experience of Dunbeath Strath can be

easily interpreted as being high in restorative qualities, so too can the resulting impact - his first experience of the elusive atom - be easily compared to the process of self-regulation. Recounting time spent resting on a boulder by the river during his explorations, Gunn (1956, p.29) describes the meditative and contemplative state he finds himself in as he sits in the sun watching and listening to the passing water:

‘Within the mood of content [...] was this self and the self was me. The state of content deepened wonderfully and everything around was embraced in it. And then within this amplitude the self as it were became aware of seeing itself, not as “I” or an “ego” but rather as a stranger it had come upon and was even a little shy of. Transitory, evanescent - no doubt, but the scene comes back across half a century, vivid to the crack in the boulder that held the nut’. (Gunn, 1956, p.29)

Vividly impressed in his memory, the strength of Gunn’s first apparent experience of environmental self-regulation is obvious. As has been noted previously, such occurrences within restorative environments are considered to play a significant role in the development and maintenance of attachment bonds between person and place, with the individual being increasingly likely to return to the location in question in order to seek out similar experiences (Kaplan, 2001; Korpela et al., 2001).

As we have observed, Gunn’s work is widely considered to convey the substance and nature of everyday life in the Scottish Highlands more accurately and honestly than that of any other author (BBC, 2004). *The Silver Darlings*, which will subsequently be discussed in greater depth, is set on the east coast of early nineteenth century Caithness and Sutherland in the wake of the Highland Clearances; as the anthropologist and film-maker Paul Basu notes, in it, as with several of his novels, ‘Gunn powerfully evokes the capacity for place to ‘mean’ - and to mean simultaneously at the most social and the most personal levels’ (2005, p.3).

#### **4.2.3 ‘The Silver Darlings’**

Taking its title from a moniker for herring (which references both the colour

of the fish and the wealth the herring boom brought to many), *The Silver Darlings* tells of the human struggle of a community adapting to a new way of life; having been driven from the land to which they were so attached to the coast of Caithness and Sutherland (by landlords who saw more profit to be gained from sheep farming), families and communities had little choice but to forge a living from the sea. Despite at first seeming unfamiliar and unwelcoming, as time passed and confidence and knowledge grew, the relationship between the people and the sea gathered value and strength.

Although depicting fictional characters, the novel – recognized to be an important Scottish cultural document (BBC, 2004) - speaks true of historic local occurrences (such as the Highland clearances, a cholera epidemic and the herring boom) and their impact on the communities in the area; additionally, many of the locations are commonly recognised - through accurate descriptions of and references to local landscapes and landmarks - to be based upon the fishing villages (including Lybster and Gunn's native Dunbeath) which are scattered along the east coast of Caithness.

Central to the story is Finn, who we are introduced to in the fourth chapter, titled *Finn and the Butterfly*; in the preceding three chapters, giving a background to the story, Gunn acquaints us with Tormad and Catrine, Finn's parents, who are preparing for Tormad's first fishing trip away from their new home in Dale, Sutherland. Having previously lost an uncle to drowning, Catrine is fearful of Tormad going to sea; despite her protestations, however, she is unable to deter him from going. Upon hauling their nets for the first time, Tormad and his crew are approached by an unfamiliar vessel – a naval warship intent on impressment; failing to heed demands to abandon their catch, Tormad confronts the commander of the ship, only to be pulled from his boat at gunpoint and beaten unconscious. This is the last the reader hears of him alive; his crew were also captured, with the blood-spattered boat being abandoned at sea before eventually being towed back to shore by volunteers from Dale. The community reels from the shock of the pressganging. Catrine is distraught; mourning Tormad and haunted by her dream, she feels unable

to stay in their home alone, and leaves Dale to travel north to Dunster (which Gunn modelled loosely on Dunbeath), in Caithness, to stay with a friend.

It is several years later - in Dunster - that the fourth chapter (see Appendix 1) opens; Finn, who was not born at the time of his fathers capture, is now four years old. In what appears to be a reflection of Gunn's previously discussed early personal explorations and experiences of Dunbeath Strath, this chapter of the book details the beginnings of Finn's quest for an understanding and sense of self, sharing with the reader what appears to be the boy's first encounter with the Strath; the impacting richness and strength of Finn's experience (both sensory and emotional) is such that, at numerous points in the novel, the Strath becomes somewhere he is drawn back to, both for adventure and when the need for solitude and reflection is felt.

Although upon first reading of *The Silver Darlings* a connection was not originally sought (as was also to later be the case with *The Atom of Delight*), comparisons between Gunn's narrative and Kaplan's Attention Restoration Theory can be easily made; whilst the novel as a whole could be considered as demonstrative of both this theory and Gunn's own attachment to place, the fourth chapter alone offers a particularly concise, strong example, and will subsequently be summarized and then briefly discussed in terms of the environmental traits outlined by Kaplan as a result.

#### **4.2.3.1        '*The Silver Darlings*' and Kaplan's Attention Restoration Theory**

First published in 1941 and 1956 respectively, both *The Silver Darlings* and *The Atom of Delight* predate Kaplan's publications on Attention Restoration Theory by numerous decades; despite there being no theoretical relationship between these two bodies of work, however, significant parallels (particularly with regard to *The Silver Darlings*) are notable.



Expanding further on the importance of the hunt for ‘the atom of delight’ being based on true existential experience, Gunn also extols the virtues of the literary novel - so long as it portrays real occurrences and first hand accounts - as a potential aid in ‘catching glimpses of further clues’. He writes:

‘[T]here are many kinds of novels. The kind that sets out to give a picture of human beings in their social and economic setting may, if it is sufficiently large and complicated, be so “like the thing” that it attains the verisimilitude of “a slice of life”. The details are accurate, the way the factory, the department, the farm, the prison, the ship, the military headquarters is run is flawless’. (1956, pp.15-16)

Highly regarded as one of Gunn’s narratives ‘of essential Highland experience’ (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2004), *The Silver Darlings* could be considered such a novel. Within the scope of this study, where the elusive atom can be considered akin to the experience of environmental self-regulation, *The Silver Darlings* will provide support to both the interpretation of Attention Restoration Theory and its hypothetical connection with Canter’s place theory; an important cultural document, the novel places the former in a familiar and relevant context, vividly telling of restorative experience in such a way that makes it much easier to understand and relate to. At the same time, it provides us with an example of Gunn’s personal place imagery, memory, identity and conceptions, contributing to a ‘narrative-like synthesis’ (Entrikin, 1991, p.26) between the science of place theory and the contextual realities of a specific architectural project.

#### **4.2.3.2 ‘Finn and the Butterfly’: Characteristics of Restorative Experience**

As discussed in chapters two and three of this research, Kaplan’s Attention Restoration Theory (Kaplan, 1995) outlines four environmental characteristics - being away, compatibility, extent, and fascination; recognized to be present in restorative settings, these qualities therefore have the inherent capability to promote the development of attachment bonds between people and place.

Demonstrative of the inquisitiveness often evoked during the observation of unfamiliar animals (a facet of this construct identified by Kaplan (1995, p.172)), Finn's recurring intrigue and delight regarding the butterflies is just one indicator that his environment was rich in *fascination* (and was therefore capable of 'facilitating involuntary attention by the intrinsic interest of the situation' (Oullette et al., 2005, p.176)).

[H]is eyes grew round in brightness and wonder. He ran after it in a rapture, but when he got up from his second fall it had vanished. Where did you go? Where? Where? He followed into the wood'. (Gunn, 1969, p.92)

Providing him with a 'soft' fascination, Finn's encounters occurred in a natural environment, within which it is recognized that restorative experiences and personal reflection are most likely to occur (Kaplan, R. 1993, 2001; Kaplan, S. 1983, 1995). As with the other constructs identified by Kaplan, connections to nature and natural processes also play a key role in providing a high level of *compatibility* (Cawte, 1967; Kaplan, 1995; Sacks, 1987), partly due to the lesser degree of effort that is required to function appropriately in such settings. Also a contributing factor is the reason for which an individual often knowingly visits a natural environment – to pursue a particular activity, such as bird watching or fishing (Kaplan, 1995). In this instance, Finn knew from his observations of the butterflies and their movements that they could be found (and ultimately caught) in the environment that he was exploring, and although he repeatedly lost sight of the butterflies he chased, they frequently appeared and reappeared in front of him, drawing him through the landscape.

As has been noted, Finn felt - at times - as if he was very far away from home, even though he was close by; 'physically [...] removed' from his everyday surroundings and routine, the opportunity was offered to Finn for '[a] change in the direction of [his] gaze', allowing 'an old environment to be viewed in a new way' – all of which have been identified as being typical traits of *being away* (Kaplan, 1995, p.173).

[W]hen at last he saw he was getting near the top, he went on without stopping

once, and would have been very tired had he not emerged and gazed down and around upon the whole world.

He saw more houses than ever he had seen before, and one house – one house – seemed familiar and yet strangely small, and he could never have been certain it was his own house if he hadn't seen black Jean and red Bel, the two milch cows, tethered beyond the house in the rough grass towards the burn. They were small also. Like a discoverer, he was proud and excited, and then had a great longing for the home he could see'. (Gunn, 1969, p.93)

Although perhaps feeling like he had covered a great distance on his adventures, in reality Finn was not all that far from home, a characteristic often typical of an environment regarded to be generous in *extent*; although on occasion his thoughts returned to his mother, the landscape he encountered appeared to 'constitute a whole other world' (Kaplan, 1995, p.174), occupying a significant proportion of his mind whilst also inviting exploration (Kaplan, 2001; Korpela et al., 2001).

'He went on and on, round little bushes and under big boulders [...]'. (Gunn, 1969, p.88)

The scale of the environment and its features in relation to Finn would also be likely to have contributed to the creation of a sense of extent, as would the narrow paths that drew him through the landscape in pursuit of his quarry. In addition, Gunn's description of Finn standing at the historic House of Peace<sup>24</sup> (see Figure 4.9) 'exposed in the centre of all the light in the world' (1969, p.95) suggests a momentary connection to a figurative 'larger world' (Kaplan, 1995, p.174), potentially providing extent that is non-literal. Finn's visits to Dunbeath Strath and the House of Peace (which occur on several occasions throughout the novel, as he reaches adulthood) coincide with events that trouble him or require a period of solitude and reflection; his killing of the butterfly as a young child is the first such instance. Next in this series of events comes (some years later) the death of his grandmother from the plague, followed by his first meeting with the girl who will eventually become his wife, then a brawl in a local inn, and the purchase of his first boat.

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<sup>24</sup> The House of Peace refers to the site of a suspected monastery at the entrance to Dunbeath Strath; also known as the Church or Chapel of Peace (or Chapelhill), the ruins of this structure are still partially standing and have been the focus of several recent archaeological digs. (Blackie and Macaulay, 1998, p.9)



**Figure 4.9** House of Peace, Chapelhill, Dunbeath Strath

The frequency and recurrence of such visits provides a strong indication of the compatibility that exists between the qualities of the House of Peace and Finn's needs in terms of self-regulation; in addition, it is demonstrative of the strength of his attachment to this particular place, supporting the previously discussed findings of Oullette et al. (2005) and Kaplan (1983, 1995, 2001). The last of these visits to the House of Peace, in the closing pages of the novel, comes before Finn's marriage and tells of a pivotal moment in his life;

'Finn turned his head and looked at the grey-lichened stones. They were very old, and their age gave him a feeling of immense time on whose threshold he lay. What he had lived of life was only its beginning. Its deeper mysteries were ahead. As if all hitherto had been but accident and skirmish, there came flooding through him a deep blood-warm realization of the potency of life. It uncurled in his limbs stretching them in slow strength, in a divine feeling of well-being'. (Gunn, 1969, p.583)

Restorative experience is perceived to be 'a multi-level phenomenon'. This,

the most powerful of Finn's personal experiences at the House of Peace, is comparable to the fourth (and highest) level, which brings 'reflection on one's life, on one's priorities and prospects, on one's actions and goals' (Korpela (2012, p.34), citing Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989).

'Finn's thought suddenly quickened, and for an intense moment the knoll took on its immemorial calm. Time became a stilled heart-beat. Stealthy, climbing sounds. Finn's body grew taut, heaved up on to supported palms, Whisperings, the movement of the top of a small birch-tree here and there whose trunk invisible hands gripped. The hunters in their primordial humour were closing in. Life had come for him'. (Gunn, 1969, p.584)

As with much of his writing, *The Silver Darlings* is also a demonstration of Gunn's personal experience of both place and attachment to place, celebrating his fondness for the environment in which he grew up. In addition, it is an expression of Gunn's concern for the loss of our heritage, which he perceived as being felt throughout northern Scotland; the decline of the Gaelic communities (and, subsequently, the culture and tradition that was passed down orally rather than through text) led to 'the modern Highlander [being] separated from his roots' - and often, as a consequence, from his sense of both self and of belonging to a place (Stokoe, 2007, p.190). Gunn felt strongly that in order to keep the culture of the Highlands alive, folk songs and tales should be frequently retold (BBC, 2004). As a response to this, he provides his readers with historical novels that richly communicate and sustain important aspects of Highland cultural heritage (such as traditions, myths, and superstitions), as well as demonstrating the importance of local heritage to both the historical and present-day community (Stokoe, 2007, p.191-193).

The works of both Young and Gunn are creative responses to individual experiences and bonds within a particular community, culture, landscape and history. Caithness has long been recognised as providing such inspiration for creativity; Gunn even suggests that Robert Louis Stevenson 'may well here have first found his 'wine-red moor'' (2009, p.3).

More recently, Lybster's name in particular has become widely known for

attracting a wide range of artists and creative practitioners to the county; once famous as a fishing port, it is now renowned as the home of North Lands Creative Glass, ‘an international centre of excellence in glass making’ (Gunn, I., 2005, p.5). Introducing North Lands, the following section will discuss everything from its inception to its anticipated growth, highlighting select artworks that have been inspired by the context of this now world-famous glass facility, before revealing its role within this body of research.

### **4.3 North Lands Creative Glass**

‘Now that the herring supply has dwindled it is a changed community. Glass and glass artists have arrived and are making a difference’. (Klein, D., 2006b, p.39)

Established in 1995 in a former undertaker’s and joiner’s workshop behind Main Street, Lybster (see Figure 4.10), the ambition of North Lands was stated to be ‘to stimulate the growing interest in the possibilities of glass as an art form’ (Gunn, I., 2005, p.5) in a setting ‘where artists could work without distraction, inspired by the landscape and supported by the local community’ (Klein, D., 2006b, pp.39-40). Its inception can be credited to Lord MacLennan of Rogart, who - as the local Member of Parliament at the time - had a strong interest in encouraging creative arts in his constituency of Caithness and Sutherland (Gunn, I., 2005; Klein, D., 2006a).





**Figure 4.10** North Lands Creative Glass, Lybster - former studio (now housing an office and small gallery)

With an initial intention to host one annual master class by a leading glass artist (the first being held in 1996) alongside ‘some kind of conference’ (Klein, D., 2006b, p.40), the years that have followed have seen interest in North Lands grow significantly, commensurate with its reputation and programme; in 1996, there was one master class; the next year there were two; doubling again, by 2002 there were four, and between 2004 and 2010 there were five<sup>25</sup>. The growing popularity and reputation of North Lands has repeatedly led to a need for larger, more adequate facilities. In 2002 the Alastair Pilkington Studio (housed in a former school building dating from 1877 - see Figure 4.11)

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<sup>25</sup> In addition to the four that North Lands continues to offer each year, an additional master class was offered and sponsored by Bullseye Glass Co. between 2004 and 2010.

was opened, with the adjacent Old School House (to the rear of the studio) being renovated in 2004 to provide living accommodation and a library. Predictably, with the acquisition of these new facilities North Lands saw a marked increase not only in the number of master classes held, but also in the volume of artistic residencies, which has varied from one or two groups of three artists to a maximum of four groups of four annually, all participating for six to eight weeks of the year (NLCCG, 2005).



**Figure 4.11** North Lands Creative Glass, Alastair Pilkington Studio

By 2007 it was clear that expansion would once again be necessary if North Lands was to continue to grow and operate at the same pace and level that it had previously. The Board of Directors took the decision to seek funding for the renovation of St. Mary's Church – a derelict building (owned by the late Dan Klein, a founding member of North Lands and a renowned authority on contemporary glass) located fifty metres south of the Alastair Pilkington Studio. Unfortunately, the building was in such a state of disrepair that in 2011 the project was deemed unfeasible; at the time of writing, North Lands are looking to provide additional facilities within the grounds of the Old School House and the Alastair Pilkington Studio.

Since the opening of the Alastair Pilkington Studio in 2002, community



outreach activities have also featured in the North Lands programme (see Figure 4.12), where classes open to both adults and children - regardless of experience or knowledge - have proven to be extremely popular. In addition, glass artists and enthusiasts who live locally (with occasional assistance from artists in residence) teach classes in kiln forming, engraving and glass blowing all year-round.



**Figure 4.12** Outreach class led by Patricia Niemann (North Lands Creative Glass, 2006)

‘Outreach is [...] a way of reaching out to the local community, something that is felt is important. Their involvement makes a great difference to the way North Lands is conceived in the area’. (Klein, D., 2006b, p.42)

Anticipating and understanding the importance of a close connection between the visiting artists and the local community, North Lands also looks to provide a platform for the inclusion of those with little or no artistic knowledge or experience of glass. The positive relationships built through regular exhibition openings and such outreach activities are boosted further

by the desire of many artists to become immersed in the culture and history of Lybster and its surrounding environment; through sharing and giving insight into their creative process, these artists have, in many ways, given the locals different means to interpret and relate to their environment, revealing forgotten value and meaning (Douglas, 2003). In my experience, such relationships are often hard won in rural areas such as Caithness, where – to speak generally - there are somewhat limited opportunities for engagement with art and artistic fields; more often than not such activities have to be actively sought out, with the lack of visible public presence seeming to contribute significantly to the perception of art and artists by many. Over the years, I have spoken to a great number of people (local to Lybster or nearby) who have had little or no exposure to art, and on that basis automatically assume that it is not something they would understand or like, or that they would have little or nothing in common with artists. The change in this attitude is becoming gradually more noticeable within Lybster and its rural locale; knowing that those who visit North Lands are often interested in getting to know more about the village, its history and inhabitants, locals are (in return) interested to find out more about the artists and what attracts them to visit. Alliances and long-standing friendships are formed; locals will drop into the studio with boxes of home baking or charts of the seabed, invite artists to go to parties or perhaps to come fishing, offer to teach them Scottish country dancing at ceilidhs, and give them a warm welcome over a dram in the local pub.

More obvious than this shift in view are the economic benefits that North Lands has brought to the village; the steady stream of visitors who come each year (often staying several weeks at a time) provide regular custom for the local shops, restaurants, bars, hotels and guesthouses. Local businesses are particularly busy during the peak of conference and master class season, when the village can gain up to eighty additional residents.

Given the popularity and growing reputation of both the glass centre and Lybster, North Lands' need for expansion is understandable. The document

outlining the development of St. Mary's Church (see Appendix 2) proposes a combination of public and private spaces, to include drawing studios, a library and archive, and a permanent gallery space for North Lands' extensive collection of glass (currently standing at over one hundred pieces)<sup>26</sup>. This collection - largely made up of pieces donated by former artistic directors, master class leaders, artists-in-residence and students (see Figures 4.13, 4.14, and 4.15 for examples) - is testament to the influence found in the context of Lybster and its surroundings; many of the pieces are inspired by the environment – built, historical, cultural and natural, and reflect memories, associations or attachments which have been created.



**Figure 4.13**     *Landscapes of the Highlands of Scotland* (Gellis, S., 2006)

“Landscapes of the Highlands’ is a section of a larger piece called ‘Landscapes’. Sandy asked people to bring sand or soil from around the world and describe the place they took it from, so it is a document of people as well as places. These samples reflect Caithness in the North Highlands of Scotland [...]’. (North Lands Creative Glass, 2005, p.26 )

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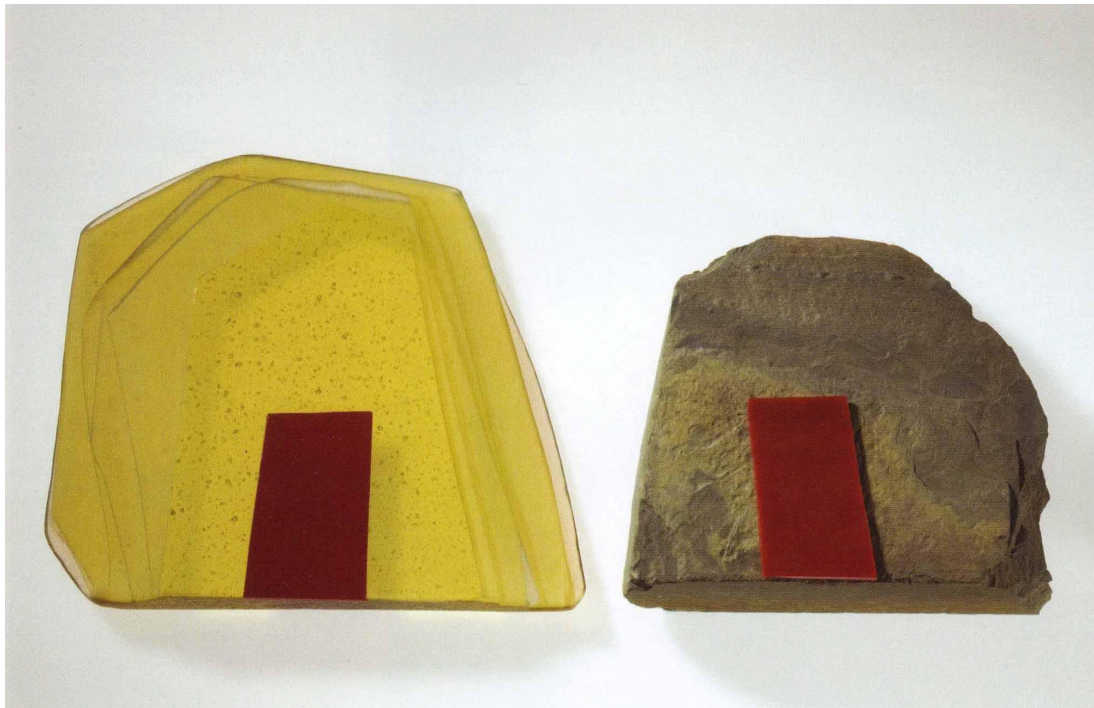
<sup>26</sup> As previously noted, at the time of writing, the facilities contained within the proposed expansion were under review due to St. Mary's being deemed an financially unfeasible location for this project.



**Figure 4.14**     *Whaligoe* (Timoko, M., 2005)

‘Cast glass sculptural group in grey/green glass composed of two fisherwomen carrying baskets, on stepped rectangular plinth base, inspired by the women who carried herring loads from the sea in creels up 350 steps [...]’. (North Lands Creative Glass, 2005, p.62)





**Figure 4.15** *Untitled* (Klein, S., 2003)

'Composition in stone and glass with two forms suggesting croft houses, one of stone with a red glass 'door', the other in amber and red Bullseye Glass [...]'. (North Lands Creative Glass, 2005, p.35).

As this small sample of pieces illustrates, the contextual characteristics and features found to be inspirational are both many and varied; the natural environment, local architecture, history, and light - all are drawn upon in response to their influence on experience and memory. With the solitude of the surroundings comes focus, contemplation and often the opportunity for a 'life-changing experience' (Page, 2006, p.55); visiting artists - many of whom return - often leave with both strong attachments to Lybster and Caithness, and with lasting memories of the 'unique creative potential' (Klein, D., 2006b, p.42) of North Lands and its context.

'It's almost an exotic environment,' says Vallien. "The landscape, the sea, the harbour, all the heather and memories of the past, I won't forget the place."<sup>27</sup> (Page, 2006, p. 55)

It is here, in relation to such responses to a specific location, that the

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<sup>27</sup> 'Bertil Vallien, born in 1938, is most renowned as the great master of sand-casting' (Wexler Gallery, n.d.); he led the inaugural master class at North Lands in 1996.

possibilities for a strategy of place (both generalized and local) become both real and exciting. Discussing Canter's strategy for uncovering '[the description] of what is psychologically significant about a place' (1986, p.6), the previous chapter highlighted the importance of selecting the correct method of uncovering the responses of the eventual user groups. In this instance (in addition to the previously discussed conceptions of Neil Gunn), where North Lands' design brief for additional studio and exhibition accommodation will form the basis of a creative investigation, the responses do not need to be uncovered - they exist already, in the form of artworks (see Appendix 3).

'[t]he conceptions which people have of the places in which they find themselves, are frequently the scientific key which will unlock the processes by which those places have their impact'. (1977, p.6)

Supported by the previously discussed conceptions of Neil Gunn, this investigation will look for the commonalities amongst work created in - and inspired by - the context of North Lands, identifying responses to environmental characteristics that may be connected in order to completely and coherently define place in this instance; this will be discussed further in the concluding chapter of this research.

The 'life-changing' (Page, 2006, p.55) potential of the experience and surroundings hints at a broader connection to theories of place; in a statement which is at once comparable to both Kaplan's writings on self-regulation in restorative places (and Gunn's description of the atom of delight), Dan Klein (2006a, p.21) observes that

'[i]t seems like everyone who goes to North Lands comes through the experience feeling 'changed' in some way. I was no exception. Maybe, compared to the frenetic pace of our contemporary life there is something precious about the ageless isolation in that part of Scotland that universally focuses the awareness and somehow stills the mind to question, to make new connections. Certainly, there is an immense power in the quality of light that illuminates the sea and surrounding landscape, which makes it a magical and inspirational place to be'.

At the time when I first began to consider my research direction in terms of

my own attachment and Lybster (long before I considered relocating to Caithness), I was living in Edinburgh, where my reading in the college library led me to chance upon a journal article written by Dan Klein. The impact of that one piece of writing, and the above statement in particular, was considerable; Klein described a side to Lybster that I had ever seen, or had even imagined existed. The idea that Lybster had the capabilities to be so positively transformative was unexpected, and seemed almost obscure.

Intrigued, I took the decision to go north to Caithness, with a view to speaking with visiting artists about their experience of North Lands and its context. By the time of my next visit home to Lybster (early 2009), I had begun to study *The Silver Darlings* in some depth, and had learnt of North Lands' hopes for expansion, with their brief then seeming an obvious and interesting choice as a basis for my design investigation. The penultimate chapter of this thesis picks up in Lybster in 2009, discussing the development of the relationship between North Lands and my research, and the impact it had not only my own understanding and relationship with place, but also on my personal creative practice.

*Attachment to the east coast of Caithness has been illustrated and shared in many ways. Both Young and Gunn demonstrated their bonds through text, both authoring important cultural documents concerned with maintaining historical connections, sharing oral history and folklore that would no doubt otherwise be lost; describing, through characters, his experience of local environment in such detail, the content of Gunn's writing is comparable to Kaplan's Attention Restoration Theory, and will be used in support of it within the context of this research as a result.*

*The presence of North Lands Creative Glass has ensured on-going documentation of attachment and responses to place, with the work of many visiting artists being heavily influenced by their experience of time spent in Lybster and its context, often long after they have returned home. The*

*increase in both reputation and popularity of this facility is commensurate with the growing need for additional space to both support working artists and to house and exhibit North Lands' permanent collection. Created in response to the power of the environmental, cultural and historical context of Lybster, the majority of pieces that comprise the collection are evidence of collective and individual responses to place; as such, these pieces (amongst others) will be considered in relation to Canter's tripartite model and employed in the identification of environmental attributes that contribute to a sense of place (and ultimately attachment) in this instance.*

*The fifth chapter of this body of research will continue to discuss responses to place in relation to North Lands Creative Glass, further indicating the development and potential application of a creative strategy for place. Contemplating influence, experience, and a sense of attachment and identity in relation to this particular context, the unexpected emergence of the my own work in glass will be documented and discussed in relation to the previously identified tensions between person and place, and in addition, to the importance of the haptic connection architectural practice and design.*



## 5 Praxis

‘Often when looking for a thing I find something else. I knew what I was looking for, but what I find is surprising. At once some part of life is resurrected; persons move about, I see their faces, the place, almost the air of that forgotten time. Yes, it was like that! For now in some mysterious way the happenings, the arrested moments, are cleansed. Outlines are clear; the expression in the eyes, caught out of a myriad of expressions, is the lasting, the essential one; clothes, colour; the leaves on the tree, the sky; not the scent, perhaps, but the freshness of the scent. Now there is no confusion. This is how it was; if love, it was wonderful; if tragedy, it is accepted at last. I inhabit that place and judge no more’. (Gunn, 1956, p.7)

*Uniting the four tensions previously identified by the author to exist between people and place (and contributing greatly to our resulting sense of detachment), our dominant ocular lends itself to the creation of an architecture which is all too commonly based upon the projections of the designer rather than the perceptions, experiences or needs of the eventual user. In addition, falling into habits which often originate in their education, many architects are failing to reflect upon personal experience and memory during the architectural design process; instead, they maintain a distanced, subjective and unsympathetic stance which makes it increasingly difficult for them to understand and relate to those they are designing for. The strategy for place proposed within this body of research places the architect in an interstitial role between the objective and the subjective, with a responsibility (as a reflective practitioner) to facilitate the dialogue between architectural practice and the creation of place; referencing personal place imagery and relevant cultural responses, they will potentially have the means to identify and understand the conceptions of both themselves and others in the creation of place-responsive architecture.*

*This chapter will (through a personal, first-person account) document the practice component of this research, which comprises a series of works in glass, mixed-media, and on paper, all created at North Lands Creative Glass and in response to the context of Lybster and Caithness. Exploring (in part) the author's strategy for place, this body of work will begin to illustrate the importance of the haptic connection in understanding and overcoming the tensions between people and place that are being perpetuated by architectural practice.*

*High-resolution images of the work discussed within this chapter can be found in Appendix 5.*

## 5.1 *Reattachment to Place Through the Haptic Nature of Making*

Keen to better understand the powerful impact that North Lands and its context appeared to have on so many people, I chose to apply for a place on the opening master class<sup>28</sup> of the 2009 session. By coincidence, the class proved to not only be highly relevant to this body of research, but also, in hindsight, significantly influential in terms of its subsequent development; exploring kilnforming<sup>29</sup> techniques, its purpose was to ‘examine different routes from idea/source to final work, the focus being on the process from one to the other rather than the end product itself’ with, ultimately, a premise of ‘[striking] a balance between hands-on-making, drawing, thinking, talking and working from direct experience of the local environment’ (Bruce, 2009a, p.1).

Despite my original intentions to use my time at North Lands solely to observe and document the responses of the other participants in relation to their surroundings, two issues became rapidly apparent. Firstly, that in order to accurately understand the development and expression of connections between people and place in this instance, a significant portion of my attention and time would need to be devoted to gaining first-hand experience of the creative practice of glass making; and secondly, that I had, unexpectedly, become completely enthralled by both the material and the processes involved in glass making, to the degree that I had begun (alarmingly) to doubt my choice of career as an architect. Hindsight would reveal that the latter was due to the absence of the haptic connection in my day-to-day activities - at the time of the master class, my research was in its infancy, with the initial eight months having been computer-based and devoted to extensive reading on environmental psychology. I yet to consider the impact of modernism on the relationship between person and place, or to

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<sup>28</sup> Titled *Light+Colour=Form*, this class was sponsored by Bullseye Glass Co. and led by Jane Bruce and Bruno Romanelli. Further information can be found in Appendix 4, which summarizes the timeline of events relevant to the development of the author’s creative

<sup>29</sup> ‘Kilnforming is the shaping of glass within a kiln, using heat and gravity. Kilnforming encompasses a wide variety of glassforming methods, which include fusing, slumping, kilncasting, printmaking, drawing and painting with glass, and other techniques.’ (Bullseye Glass, 2013a)

identify the resulting series of tensions that were inextricably bound by the visual bias of Western culture – all of this was to follow at a much later date.

Once the class ended, although at the time unable to explain or recognize why, I felt compelled to keep making, and to keep exploring the possibilities of glass as a medium. In the four years between then and the time of submission (July 2013), I have been fortunate enough to have participated in a series of residencies and symposia at North Lands Creative Glass that have permitted me to do just that; in addition, such opportunities have also made it possible not only for me to progress my work, but have allowed critical reflection on the relevance of my developing creative practice in relation to the process of architectural design. Although not premeditated, my work to date (which this chapter will discuss) has been heavily influenced by personal experience and memories of derelict, historic buildings located in a variety of places in or around Lybster. Through the haptic processes of drawing and making I have forged an unexpected reconnection to Lybster and Caithness, gaining, in the process, a critical understanding of the architect's essential role in fostering the dialogue between architectural practice and both the understanding and creation of place.

This chapter will proceed in a loosely chronological order<sup>30</sup>, discussing, in turn, each of the places I have responded to and the work that has resulted. Interwoven throughout will be references to the four tensions identified and discussed in the first chapter, illustrating how a recovery from the widespread sense of detachment to place in the Western world could be achieved through a more considered and haptic approach to architectural practice; existing in the relationship between people and place, these tensions are rooted in our architectural approach to: history and locality; materiality and meaningful form; the body and the senses; and methods of representation and communication.

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<sup>30</sup> A more precise timeline summarizing and documenting related events can be found in Appendix 4.

### 5.1.1 Camster



**Figure 5.1** Camster Round

Built over 5,000 years ago, the Grey Cairns of Camster are some of Scotland's oldest stone monuments, and are among the best preserved Neolithic burial tombs in Great Britain (Historic Scotland, n.d.). Lying around 9 miles to the northeast of Lybster, on remote moorland in the Caithness Flow Country<sup>31</sup>, they comprise three structures, all of drystone construction - Camster Round (see Figure 5.1), Camster Long, and a third, ruined cairn. The smallest of the three (and of primary influence in this instance), Camster Round has a diameter of 18 metres, stands at 3.7 metres high, and has a central chamber only accessible through a narrow, low-ceilinged entrance and passage, along which it is necessary to crawl to reach the taller internal space (Gazetteer for Scotland, 2013). A considerable amount of ash, human bone, pottery, and flint tools were found within Camster Round during an excavation in 1865, strengthening the supposition that these chambered cairns had played a significant role in ancient burial rituals and ceremonies (Caithness Archaeology Trust, 2004); however, the 'overzealous antiquarians' (Historic Scotland, n.d.) involved had removed all trace of their findings, the location

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<sup>31</sup>"The Flow Country is widely considered to be the largest area of blanket bog in the world. Together with associated areas of heath and open water it is of international importance as a habitat and for the diverse range of rare and unusual breeding birds it supports. Covering about 4,000 km<sup>2</sup> [1500 square miles], the Flow Country is a large, rolling expanse of blanket bog found in Caithness and Sutherland in Scotland'. It has also been nominated and is currently under consideration for future inscription on the World Heritage List (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2013).

or existence of which is now completely unknown. As a consequence, there remains a great deal of mystery over who was buried here, as well as how, why and when (Gazetteer for Scotland, 2013).

Although having visited the cairns many times previously, I had never taken the time to study them in any depth, or to consider their cultural importance; a group excursion to Camster during that initial master class at North Lands offered me such an opportunity, and marked the beginning of a significant shift in my creative practice. Prior to departing the studio on the morning of our visit, we had been set a drawing task, and were to respond quickly and instinctively to whichever aspect of the local environment we were drawn to. As we neared the end of our visit to the cairns I had crawled into the inner chamber of Camster Round, realising as I looked outwards just how much of a feat of construction each structure was; as the light diffused along the length of the narrow passageway, it caught the edges of the vertically-laid stones that lined it, and I was struck by how long the cairn had stood for, by the solidity and robustness of its structure, and by the understanding of both material and construction of whoever had built it. The mystery of not knowing (and the fact that we will never know) both who had built them and whom they had been built for added to the allure. Short on time, I took a quick photograph for reference, and, using graphite, did a quick sketch depicting the manner in which the light fell within the interior of the passageway, picking out the highlighted edges of the stone with an eraser in a series of gestural marks (Figure 5.2). Whereas my usual drawing style had a tendency to be more measured and precise, this sketch was created in a much freer and less pre-meditated manner; although lost on me at the time, the significance of this drawing method would later reveal itself to be critical to my developing creative practice, as will be discussed in due course.



**Figure 5.2** *Camster: Maquette 2* development sequence  
From left to right: entrance to cairn; view outwards from internal chamber; *Camster*, 2009, graphite on cartridge paper, 455(h) x 325(l) mm

Upon returning to the studio, I began the development of a three-dimensional wax form based upon a foreshortened abstraction of my view down the passageway, referring, as I worked, to the earlier drawings and photographs that had documented my experience. This planar form was then encased within a refractory mould, and later steamed out to reveal a void into which the glass would then be cast whilst in the kiln. The colours used within the piece were chosen as a reflection of the quality and tonal changes of the light I had experienced from within the cairn, from its warmth as it falls on the land at the height of summer, to its coolness as it fell on the stones lining the increasingly dark passageway and inner chamber. Once fired and removed from the mould, the piece was cleaned in preparation for coldworking<sup>32</sup>; to further refine the form and to give the piece a smooth, satin polish that would diffuse the light, each face was hand-ground with loose grit before gestural marks (reminiscent of both the appearance of the highlighted stone and the gestural action used to depict the light in the original drawing) were created through lathe-work (Figure 5.3).

As was indicated at the beginning of this chapter, as time has passed, it has become apparent that there are many connections to be found between my

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<sup>32</sup> 'Coldworking changes the shape or surface texture of glass, using tools and processes that do not rely on heat. Coldworking methods include grinding, carving, engraving, polishing, sandblasting, and other techniques'. (Bullseye Glass, 2013b)

creative explorations and the previously identified tensions that (through existing within our contemporary architectural approach) have emerged in the relationship between people and place<sup>33</sup>. In the instance of *Camster: Maquette 2*, there is a particularly strong and contrasting dialogue with our detachment from history and locality. Both this piece and the process involved in its creation acknowledge and respond to local cultural context, communicating the pleasure and memory of experience<sup>34</sup>; in addition, responding to the dialogue (both historic and present-day) between the scale of the body and the intimacy of the space<sup>35</sup>, the significance of the place in terms of its roots and the experience it offers is acknowledged<sup>36</sup>, alongside the power and importance of its 'temporal dimension' (Van Eyck, 1967, cited in Frampton, 2007, p.298). Perhaps most importantly (both on a personal level and terms of the then-emerging direction this body of research), the experience of making had promoted the formation of a connection with place, and encouraged me to value my personal experience of a meaningful and culturally valuable setting.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> It should be reiterated that such links have not been premeditated or post-rationalized, but instead result from the previously discussed process of *reflection-in-action* (Schön, 1983, p.68).

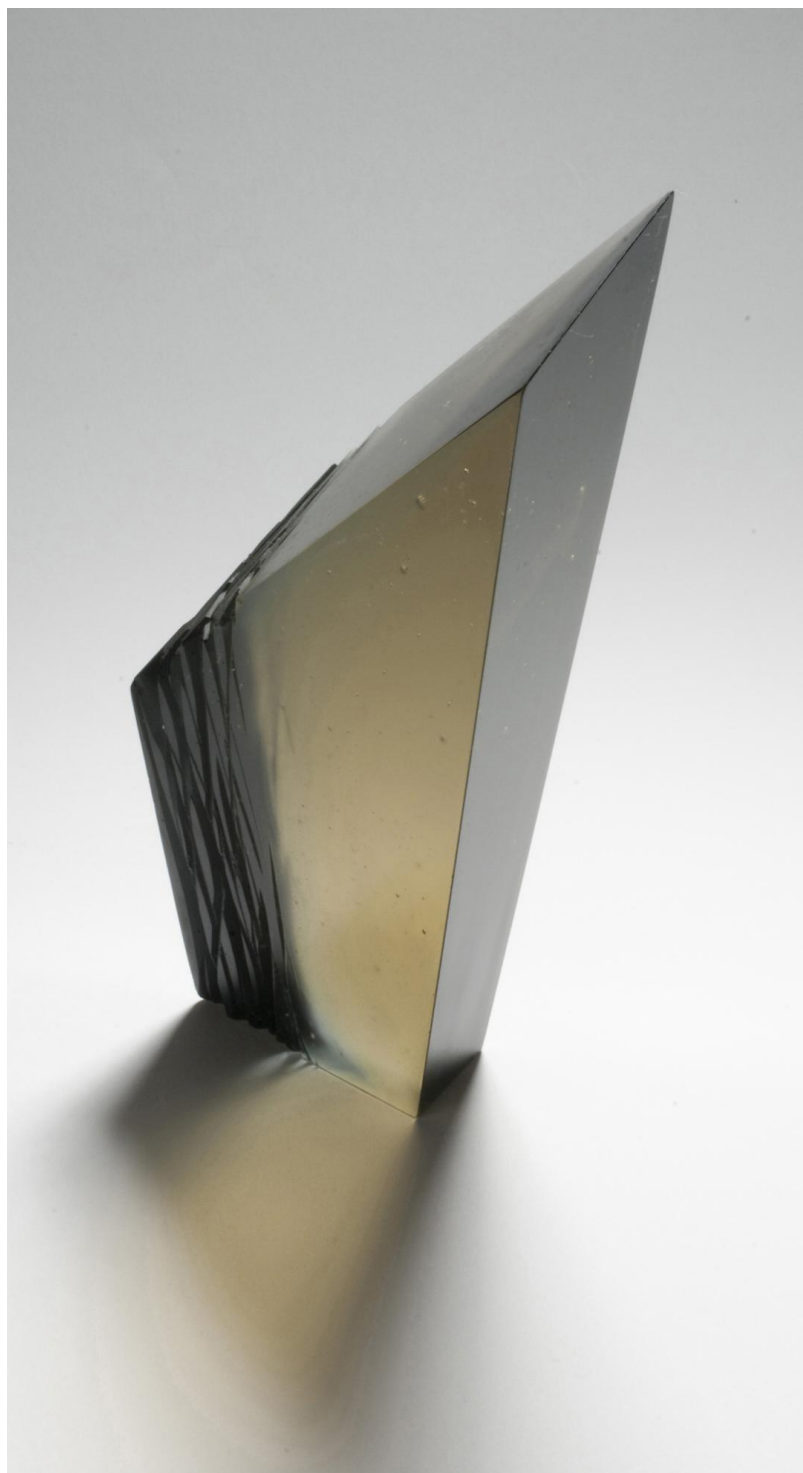
<sup>34</sup> Refer to citation of Caruso (2008, p.12) on this topic in section 1.3.

<sup>35</sup> Refer to citation of Bloomer & Moore (1977) on this topic in section 1.3.

<sup>36</sup> Refer to citation of Relph (1976, p.143) on this topic in section 1.3.

<sup>37</sup> Refer to citations of Franck and Lepori (2007, p.28) and Mazumdar (1993, p.235) on this topic in section 1.3.





**Figure 5.3**      *Camster: Maquette 2*  
2009, kilnformed glass, 165(h) x 110(l) x 35(w) mm

### 5.1.2 Harbour House, Lybster



**Figure 5.4** Harbour House, Lybster

Harbour House (Figure 5.4), was built during in the early 1830s, at the height of the herring boom, as a Fishery Office for the port of Lybster, which had been recognized as a Fishing Station some 15 years previous. One of over 20 fisheries in Britain, at the head of each district was a Fishery Officer, responsible for ensuring both that the work carried out by the fishermen and curers was done by law, and that the cured herring that left for market was of the highest possible quality (Young, 1998). Records indicate that the last Fishery Officer to work and live in Harbour House left around 1903, at which point the building became a home for the harbourmaster. Having lain empty and unused since the mid-1970s, it was bought in 2008 by Louise Tait, a glass artist and board member of North Lands Creative Glass, who stated the following about her intentions for the building:

‘[...] I have a short and long term vision for [Harbour House]. The short term is to do

it up to rent out for short term holiday lets and the longer term plan would be to do it and the stone 'shop' building next to it up as a home and studio. In the first case I would want to incorporate some kiln formed glass into it, but would be renting it so need to bear that in mind. I want it to be a light space, so had thought of borrowing some light from upstairs into downstairs, maybe with a glass staircase and some glass elements in the upper floor that would channel light down. I envisage the upper floor as an open plan space with most of the living been done up there, perhaps with a bed that folds into the wall in the far wall, and a studio kitchen living/dining area in the other end. Downstairs a bathroom and a second bedroom/study. I wouldn't plan to extend the actual footprint of the house, though in the second phase I may look at connecting it to the adjacent building. I had an initial discussion with planning when I bought the property about opening up a larger window in the end looking out to sea and they were okay with that, so that should make for a better view at that end of the house'. (Tait, 2009)

My study of Harbour House began at North Lands in June 2010, during a short residency centred around the topic of kilnformed glass in the built environment (see Appendix 4, p.270), where the participants were offered the opportunity to respond to one of two somewhat hypothetical architectural case studies<sup>38</sup>. Having grown up knowing both, and having neither memories of my first impressions nor the ability to see these buildings with fresh eyes, I elected to focus on Harbour House, on the basis of a personal connection resulting from my paternal family's history with the local fishing industry.

The house, the last before you reach the sea, sits nestled into the hill at the roadside, facing across the basin of the harbour and with views both up to the village and out beyond the lighthouse. Prior to excavation by a previous owner, access was possible from the land at both ground and first floor levels (and from the front and back doors respectively). Despite the now lessened physical connection to the hill, from the exterior the house still evokes a sense of being very much rooted in the land. From the inside it is a different story, however, with the only opening to the rear of the property being the back door, which is no longer functional. Of the seven windows, only two - both facing east, towards the village - are on the ground floor, and both are boarded up, making it was easy to understand why Louise was so keen to '[borrow] some light from upstairs' (Tait, 2009).

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<sup>38</sup> The other case study was St. Mary's Church, which at the time was still under consideration as a potential location for North Lands' expansion.



**Figure 5.5** Harbour House, Lybster, early evening in summer, with Swiney Hill behind

Many visitors to North Lands have remarked on the ‘immense power’ and ‘magical’ qualities of the light in Caithness (Klein, D., 2006a, p.21), but such observations and first impressions were never something that I felt I truly understood; even as a designer, my approach to light, rooted in a culture whose livelihood had been largely dependent on the length of the days, had been practically rather than emotionally driven. Coincidentally, at the time of the residency I had just begun to read a collection of texts by Neil M. Gunn<sup>39</sup>, and had come across a passage within the essay *Caithness and Sutherland* that seemed to describe the quality of the light in Caithness perfectly, and allowed me to consider it from a different point of view. He writes:

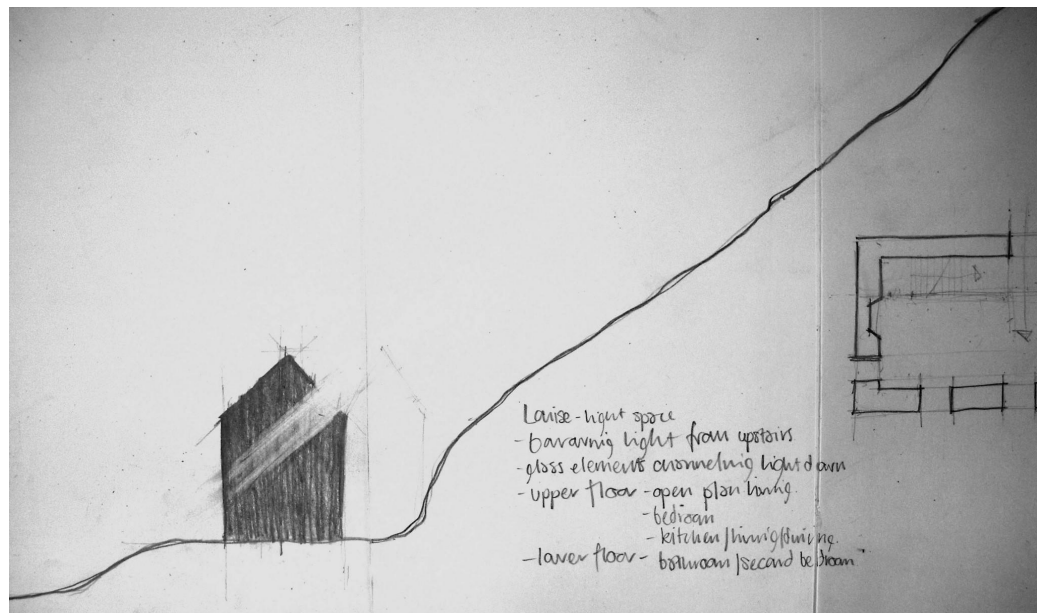
‘[i]t is not that the quality of this light [in Caithness] is magical or glamorous, tenuous or thin. There are few places in Scotland where the level light from the sinking sun can come across such a great area; but it is not altogether that. Robert Louis Stevenson, who knew Wick well, may here have found his first ‘wine-red moor’, but I have seen it of a paler gold than *amontillado*. The mind does not debate it: it gets caught up into that timelessness where beauty is no longer majestic or grand but something more intimate than life or death’. (Gunn, 2009, p.3)

As the sun is setting, the light travels down Swiney Hill and reaches the west

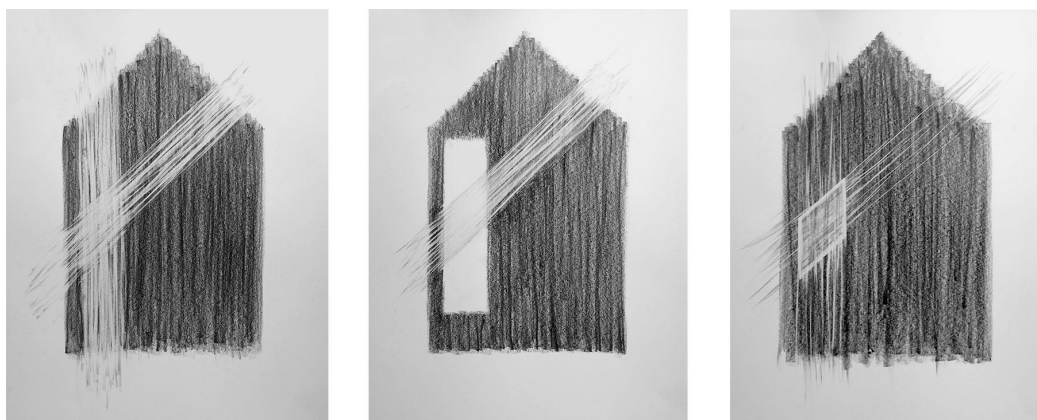
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<sup>39</sup> (aptly titled *Landscape to Light*)

elevation of the property, taking on Gunn's '[pale] gold' as it does so, particularly in summer (Figure 5.5). To allow this light into the house and to reinstate a visual connection to the land, I began (through drawing) to contemplate ways in which axis' of light and vision could be introduced (Figure 5.6) within the building; through a further series of sketches (Figure 5.7), I also considered how the singular first floor windows on each gable could be elongated to maximize the view and the connection to the sea.



**Figure 5.6** *Harbour House, Lybster* - early conceptual sketch

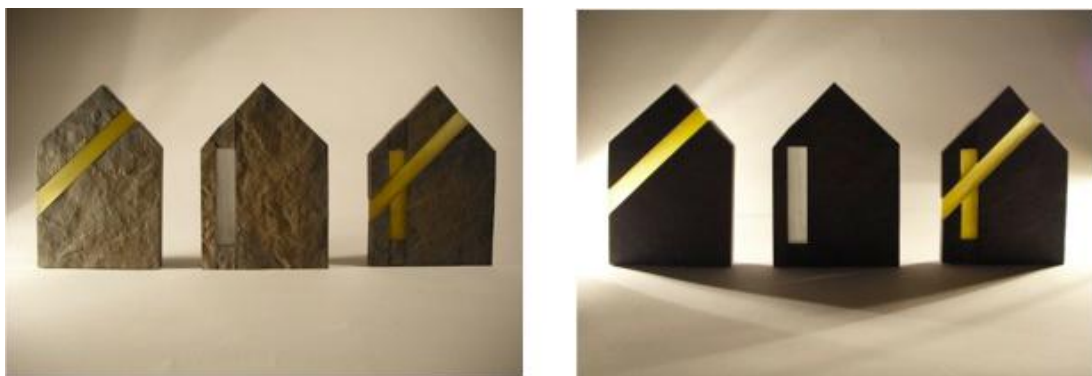


**Figure 5.7** *Harbour House, Lybster* - development sketches



Unintentionally, each of these drawings had been created in the same manner as the conceptual sketch for *Camster* - using graphite to create dark shadows, then revealing light through gestural strokes.

At some point in the early stages of translating the essence of these sketches into glass I had made the decision to represent the darkness within the building in a material other than glass, in order to create a greater contrast; Caithness stone<sup>40</sup>, providing a strong contextual reference both to the construction of Harbour House and the degree to which it felt rooted within the land (whilst also offering a distinct contrast in materiality and texture to glass), had been an automatic and instinctive choice. With the form of the shadow replicated in stone by a local mason, I cast two blocks of glass (one in a light amber and another in a light blue-grey, representing the light filtering down the hill and from the sky to the sea respectively), each with a slight gradation in colour; once cooled, these were then cut and ground by hand to fit the apertures in the stone, before the components were assembled (Figure 5.8).



**Figure 5.8** *Harbour House, Lybster* - test piece, lit from front (left) and back (right).

As an aside, whilst the glass inserts were being fired, I had begun to work with a pre-fused glass tile (3mm dark brown sheet overlaid on 3mm white), using

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<sup>40</sup> Created over 400 million years ago, Caithness Stone (which, as its name suggests, is only found in the far north of Scotland) has a density and hardness akin to granite (Caithness Stone Industries, 2009).

the lathe to create freehand gestural marks which carved through the dark layer to reveal the white underneath (Figure 5.9). It was a quick and almost throw-away exercise that came about as something to do to pass the time whilst waiting for the kiln to cool down, but there was something about this process of mark making (and the comparison with drawing on paper) that was hugely intriguing, and was to influence the development of future works.



**Figure 5.9** Lathe drawing - test piece

In a period of critical reflection following the residency, I revisited and further refined the initial Harbour House sketches, considering first the cross-section of the building form in relation to its topological context (Figure 5.10), before reiterating the original concept development (Figure 5.11) and progressing it into a series of perspective views illustrating the axis' of light within the three-dimensional volume of the house (Figure 5.12).



**Figure 5.10** *Harbour House, Lybster: Long Section*  
2010, graphite on cartridge, 415(h) x 720(l)mm (framed)



**Figure 5.11** *Harbour House, Lybster: Sections*  
2010, graphite on cartridge, 415(h) x 720(l)mm (framed)



**Figure 5.12** *Harbour House, Lybster: Internal Perspectives*  
2010, graphite on cartridge, 415(h) x 720(l)mm (framed)

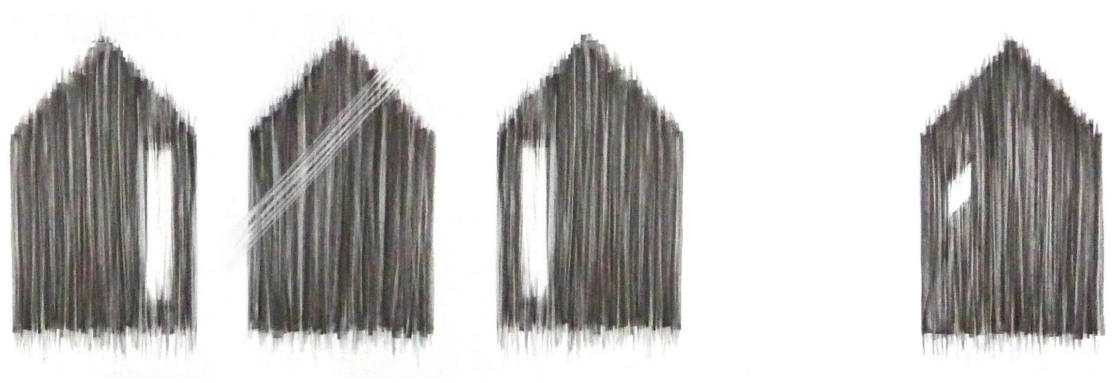
One of the many meanings of *draw* is ‘to bring, take, or pull (something) out’ from a source (McLeod, 1984, p.338), with creative thoughts and concepts often borne out of immersion in such haptic acts (Sennett, 2008). Present



within all of my creative explorations to date was an intrigue into the play of light and shadow within derelict, culturally important local buildings. With a nod to the homogenizing effects of modernism, Pallasmaa (2005, p.46) acknowledges that physiologically, the human eye is best suited to half-light rather than to intense daylight, suggesting that through lack of visual clarity and difficulty in reading physical extent comes the wandering and clarity of thought:

‘[h]omogenous bright light paralyses the imagination in the same way that homogenisation of space weakens the experience of being, and wipes away the sense of place’.

With my approach previously rooted in practicalities, I was beginning to understand the inherent potential present in the dialogue between architecture and conditions of light and shadow. Several months later, during a mixed media residency at North Lands (see Appendix 4, p.271), I returned again to my earlier responses, and also to Louise’s statement of intent for Harbour House, in which she had written of her desire to ‘incorporate [into the interior of the building] some kiln formed glass [...] elements [...] that would channel the light’ (Tait, 2009). The original series of stone and glass test pieces (Figure 5.8) had demonstrated the basis of the concept - the introduction of two axis’ which aimed to strengthen the connection between the house to its surrounding environmental context; however, what had emerged to be of the most interest was the intersection of these two paths of vision and light, which was to provide the location for my hypothetical glass installation (Figure 5.13).



**Figure 5.13** *Harbour House, Lybster: Elevations and Sections*  
2010, graphite on cartridge paper, 415(h) x 720(l)mm (framed)

Working with a local quarry, seven Caithness stone house forms (representing both stages of development, and corresponding with the drawings shown in Figures 5.11 and 5.13) were water-jet cut, offering a greater degree of accuracy and a cleaner, more refined aesthetic than the earlier exploratory test pieces. In order that glass inserts could be accurately cast to fit the apertures in the stone, rubber moulds were then taken from each form, from which refractory moulds were created (Figure 5.14), into which the glass would then later be placed for firing.



**Figure 5.14** *Mould-making for Harbour House, Lybster: Series 1 and 2*  
From top to bottom: Caithness stone masters (positive); Gelflex (rubber) moulds (negative); plaster-silica refractory moulds (positive)

The development of my creative response to Harbour House was greatly aided by reflecting upon and revisiting the essence of the concept through both drawing and making; it is at these early stages of design, Pallasmaa (2009, p.95) notes, that the creative and intuitive response (promoted by such haptic processes) is vital, but so often overlooked by our over-reliance on computers and related technology. The repetition of the haptic processes encouraged clarity<sup>41</sup> of thought and a real sense of knowing and understanding the space for which I was designing, which Turkle (1995, p.64), amongst many others, has observed to often be missing within the contemporary practice of architecture. As has been previously noted in the first chapter, he writes:

‘when you draw a site, when you put in the contour lines and the trees, it becomes ingrained in your mind. You come to know the site in a way that is not possible with the computer... you get to know a terrain by tracing and re-tracing it, not by letting the computer ‘regenerate’ it for you’.

The dialogue between the building and the site it inhabits is both startling and intriguing, and was a critical influence on the development of the work, with the resulting drawings (Figures 5.10 - 5.13) forming a direct response to the environmental and cultural context of the building, as well as to the experiential requirements of the inhabitants<sup>42</sup>. Although not appearing immediately conventional, these topographically correct drawings are drawn to scale, conveying imagined and potential experience in response to my own memories of the space. As Pallasmaa (2009) highlights, the layered nature of the haptic act of drawing – its physicality, mental representations, and existence on paper - mean that works produced (and therefore the experiences and attachments related to the documented scene) are embedded in the memory of the creator much more readily than computerised representations or even photographs, and are thus more likely to encourage and maintain a sense of attachment.

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<sup>41</sup> In line with Sennett’s observations regarding the potential of hand sketches to become immersive ‘pictures of possibility’. Refer to section 1.6.

<sup>42</sup> In contrast, Caruso (2008, p.12), in a discussion of the legacy of Modernism, observes the majority of contemporary architecture to be ‘siteless’ and lacking in consideration of both context and experience.



**Figure 5.15** *Harbour House, Lybster: Series 1*  
2010, Caithness stone and kilnformed glass, 3 components - each 160(h) x 110(l) x 20(w) mm  
Photographer: Angus Mackay



**Figure 5.16** *Harbour House, Lybster: Series 2*  
2010, Caithness stone and kilnformed glass, 4 components - each 160(h) x 110(l) x 20(w) mm  
Photographer: Angus Mackay

### 5.1.3 *Dunbeath Strath and Berriedale Shore*

These locations and the related work will be discussed in tandem due to their simultaneous development and their similarities in form and method.



**Figure 5.17** Milton Inn, Dunbeath Strath

Now abandoned and used only by farm animals for shelter, little is known about the former coaching inn at Milton (Figure 5.17). Thought to date from the mid 1700s, it sits almost a mile up the strath at Dunbeath, on the edge of what was once the road leading south from Wick to Helmsdale; with the remains of the settlement of Milntoun lying adjacent. There are few clues as to the former life of the building - its interior is strewn with debris and what once appears to have been the timber lining, and many of the small windows are boarded up.

I first visited the inn during a symposium at North Lands in July 2010 (see Appendix 4, p.271), after a chance discussion with a fellow participant about the work of Neil M. Gunn and his love for the strath.

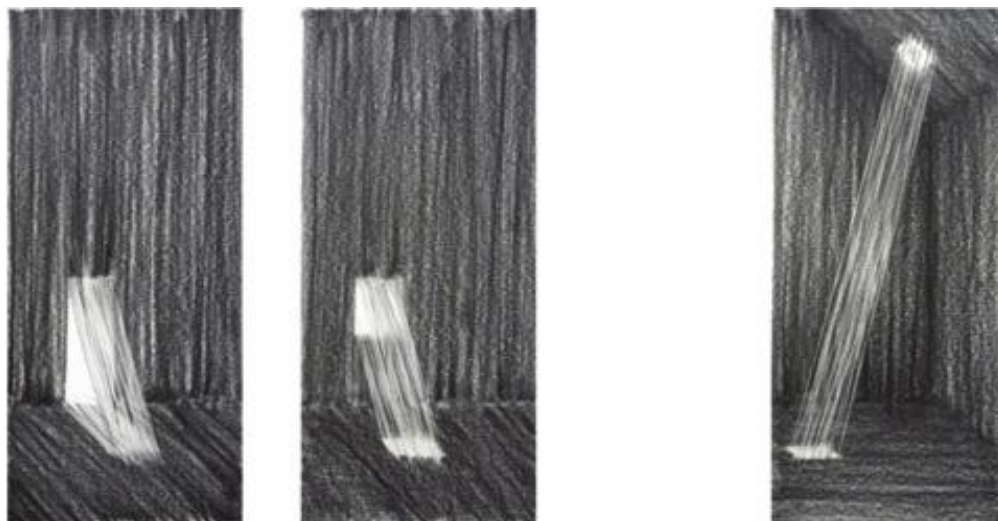
‘[t]hese first two or three miles were the rich ones, so infinitely varied in attraction that only in odd moments did we think, or dream, about one day setting out for [further afield]’. (Gunn, 1956, p.24)

Gunn’s descriptions of this setting are so vivid and full that it is easy to imagine his tales being played out there, and whilst I had many memories of

visiting the strath as a child, reading Gunn's work had begun to give it a new lease of life. Whilst there, I had taken a series of photographs of the dilapidated inn; working both from these and from memory, upon returning to the studio I developed a series of abstracted graphite sketches further documenting the conditions of light and shadow within the building (Figures 5.18 and 5.19).



**Figure 5.18** Milton Inn, Dunbeath Strath



**Figure 5.19** *Dunbeath Strath* - development sketches



What resulted from these studies was to be my first conscious exploration of negative space, which had emerged as a topic within a group discussion of that days work. Mentally tracing the steps necessary to create the eventual glass form backwards to the mould that would be required, an extruded, triangulated form was sculpted, before being fixed within a vermiculite box prior to casting. As essentially a preliminary exercise in understanding negative space, concern for the overall form of the piece was secondary to conveying the intensity of the shadow and exploring the conveyance of light through varying the depth of the glass.



**Figure 5.20** *Dunbeath Strath* - test piece upon removal from mould (left) and after initial coldworking (right)

With the process of making this test piece (Figure 5.20) had come the realization that my sculptural work to date had, in essence, been concerned negative space, and either responded to or explored the creation of solid and void (representing shadow and light respectively). This marked a real turning point in my work, and was a theme I would revisit again several months later in relation to both *Dunbeath Strath* and *Berriedale Shore*, as will be subsequently discussed.



**Figure 5.21** Shore Cottages, Berriedale

Dating from around 1820, the Shore Cottages at Berriedale (Figure 5.21), 13 miles south of Lybster, were once home to herring fishermen and their families. Having now lain uninhabited for decades, they are in a considerable state of disrepair; damp has caused the wallpaper in each room to peel away from the walls, revealing multiple layers underneath, and almost covering the perimeter of the floor. Most intriguing are the small rooms to the rear of each house, which face away from the sea, each lit solely by small, single windows positioned on the line of the eaves, at the junction where the roof meets the wall (Figure 5.22). North-facing and angled skywards, these openings let in a soft light, further adding to the gloomy and intriguing atmosphere within each of these spaces.

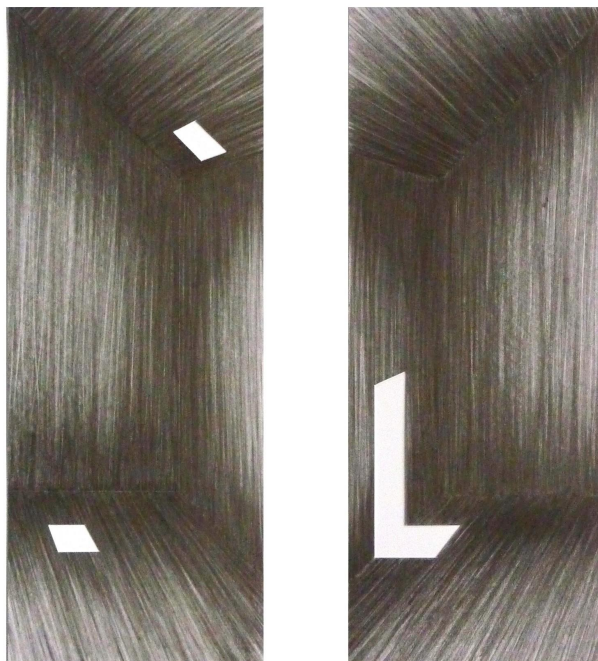


**Figure 5.22** Shore Cottages, Berriedale



'On entering the county from the Ord one may from almost anywhere near the cliffs get a view of the rock-wall all the way to Clyth Head. There are 'flaws' in this structure - fortunately, because they mean so much to the inhabitants, for here they have their harbours or creeks from which they fish with such skill and daring, or, should I say, have fished, for the decline in the sea industry has left an air of sadness and decay along the whole Caithness coast'. (Gunn, 2009, p.4)

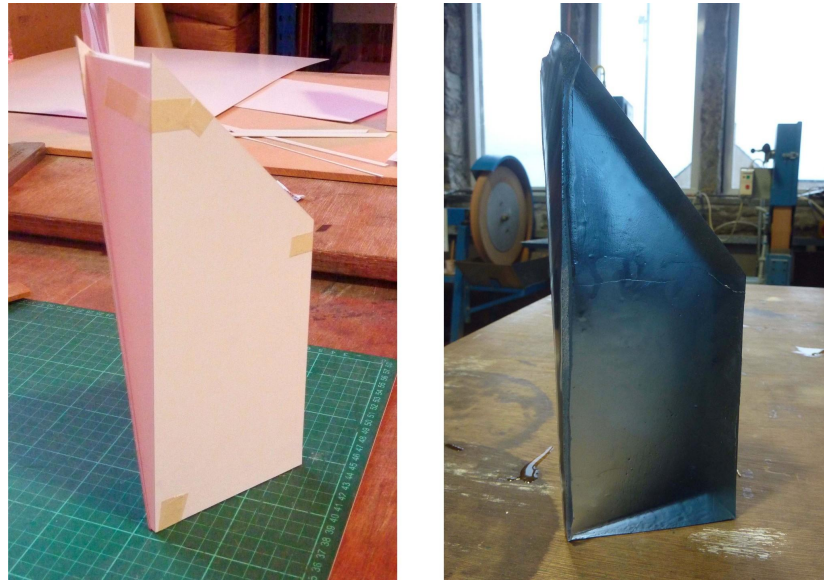
Following the earlier symposium, I had spent a considerable amount of time searching for (and then documenting) derelict, culturally important local buildings of personal interest, including the. During this period, I had returned to both the Milton Inn and the Shore Cottages multiple times, interested in the skin of these buildings and in particular in the role that the openings played in the relationship between the external and internal environments, and in how variations in the weather and the time of day affected my perception of the internal spaces.



**Figure 5.23** *Dunbeath Strath*  
2010, graphite on cartridge paper, 610(w) x 670(h) x 15(w) mm (framed)

Exploring how my experience of space could be communicated through casting (and the subsequent juxtaposition of both solid and void, and light and shadow), I created two tonal drawings through which I began to consider

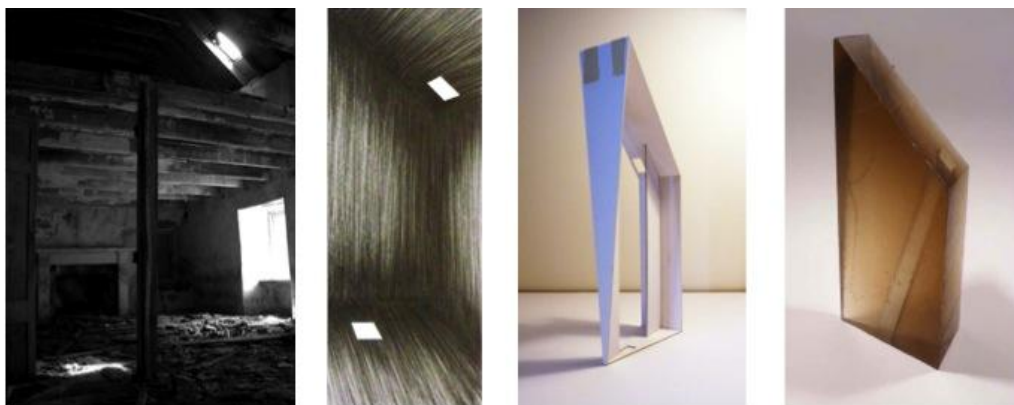
how best to communicate both the varying depths of the shadow and the passage of the light within the glass (Figure 5.23). Starting with a graphite rendering of the negative space, I cut out and subtracted where the light would both enter and exit the form. Moving to model making, I developed a tapered geometric form which referenced the interior volume, from which a silicone mould was taken, allowing multiple wax copies to be created and used, in turn, to create moulds for colour tests (Figure 5.24).



**Figure 5.24** *Dunbeath Strath: Maquette 4* - explorations of form and colour  
 From left to right: Development of a cardboard master; resulting colour test, prior to coldworking



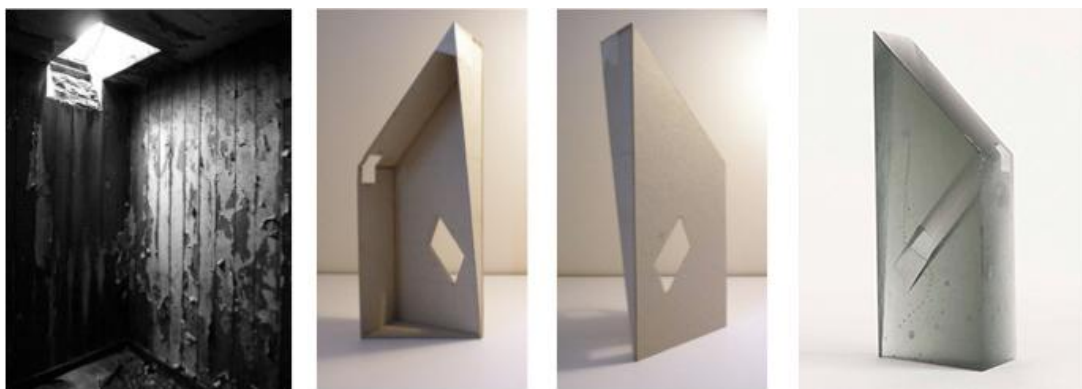
**Figure 5.25** *Dunbeath Strath: Maquette 4* - construction, investment and burn-out of cardboard maquette



**Figure 5.26** *Dunbeath Strath: Maquette 4 - development*



**Figure 5.27** *Dunbeath Strath: Maquette 4*  
2010, kilnformed glass, 260(h) x 110(w) x 50(w) mm



**Figure 5.28** *Berriedale Shore: Maquette 3 - development*



**Figure 5.29** *Berriedale Shore: Maquette 3*  
2010, kilnformed glass, 260(h) x 110(w) x 50(w) mm

My earlier explorations of Harbour House, rooted in what was essentially an architectural brief, had led me to draw comparisons with architectural model-making, and to understand that central to both outcomes, despite the difference in process, was the desire to communicate the experiential qualities of a space. Inadvertently advancing this dialogue, the maquettes resulting from this later study (Figures 5.26 to 5.29) revealed where these two different responses to representing space were beginning to meet. In addition, although my glass work had, on a basic level, become an extension of my model making, it was also clear that in such instances there could be no comparison between these two materials; glass, unlike any other medium I had worked with before, was able to evoke atmosphere, depth, narrative and emotion much more readily than any traditional architectural model or associated material. The dialogue and juxtaposition of process, the familiar territory of making models from cardboard coupled with the relatively unfamiliar methods of kilncast glass, was deeply intriguing, and presented many exciting opportunities not only in terms of my new-found creative practice, but now, also in terms of my research.

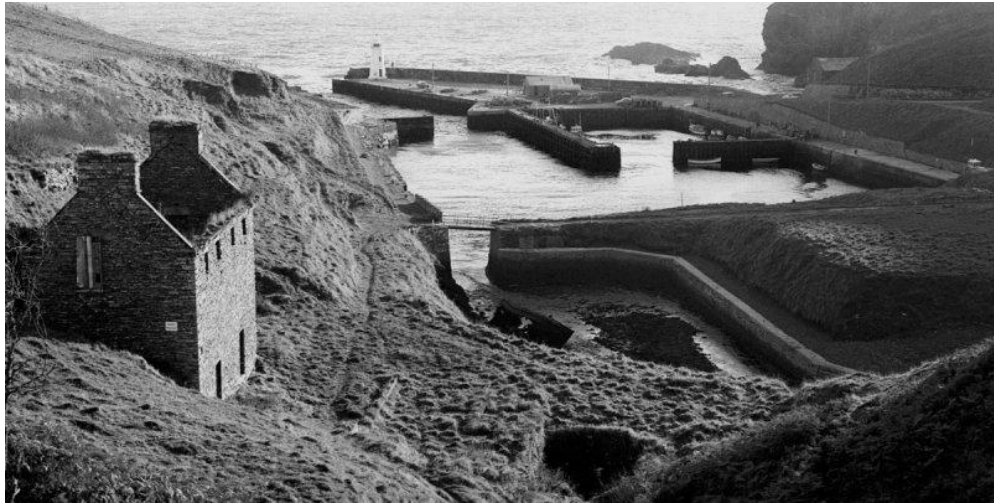
As was noted in the first chapter, Frank and Lepori observe that many contemporary architects are often guilty of dismissing experience and context, subsequently ‘projecting their ideas upon the world, rather than discovering what is already there or could emerge’ (2007, p.21). Through drawing or making by hand (which encourage engagement with (and reference to) imagined and remembered sensory experience), however, there are opportunities for establishing a stronger, genuine connection with place (Pallasmaa, 2005), as these studies of place and space have shown.

#### **5.1.4 Cooperage, Lybster; Flagstone Works, Castletown; and Harbour House, Lybster (Revisited)**

The works outlined in this section, created as part of an exhibition titled *Conversations: Architectural Responses to Place* (see Appendix 4, pp.280-



284), share a particular line of enquiry in relation to three distinct locations; opening with a comparative study of place (involving the cooperage at Lybster harbour and the flagstone works in Castletown), the discussion will then continue to include a further response to Harbour House.



**Figure 5.30** Lybster Harbour, c. early 1970s, indicating the original form of the cooperage (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, n.d.)



**Figure 5.31** Cooperage, Lybster, 2011 - view from lower Harbour Road

Clues to the industrious past of Lybster are relatively few and far between; many of the historic harbour buildings have been long since demolished, with only two (one of which is the former cooperage, where barrels had once been made for the packing and export of herring (Figures 5.30 - 5.31)) remaining.

Located on the banks of the inner harbour, where Reisgill Burn reaches the sea, it is widely thought that the cooperage (like Harbour House) was built using stone quarried on site during the excavation of the land it stands on. Contained within the remains of the ruin are two near-identical volumes, each open to the sky and with a singular west-facing doorway. The upper portion of the building, visible in Figure 5.30, was knocked down in the mid 1970s, having been deemed structurally unstable.



**Figure 5.32** Cooperage, Lybster, internal view - September 21, 2011: 15.02 PM

‘Yet it was out of that very sea that hope was now coming to them. The landlord who had burned them out in order to have a suitable desolation for sheep, had set about making a harbour at the mouth of the river, the same river that, with its tributaries, had threaded their inland valleys. Money had been advanced by him (at 6 ½ per cent. interest) to erect buildings for dealing with fish. All along these coasts - the coasts of the Moray Firth - there was a stirring of sea life. The people would yet live, the people themselves, for no landlord owned the sea, and what the people caught there would be their own [...]’. (Gunn, 1999, pp.13-14)

My paternal link to the sea and the herring industry (coupled with the rich narrative of Gunn’s *The Silver Darlings*) added an extra dimension to how I imagined the building to have been. Having been to the cooperage countless times, the most memorable was a chance visit during a second group

residency at North Lands in 2011 - I had no recollection of being inside the building in such strong sunlight, and the dramatic contrast and geometry created within the form was quite startling (Figure 5.32). This experience proved to be a central influence in the work that would unfold, as will be discussed further shortly.



**Figure 5.33** Flagstone Works, Castletown

Together with herring fishing, the quarrying and export of Caithness stone (for use as a paving and construction material) was, historically, a mainstay of industry in Caithness. Active between 1820 and 1920, the flagstone works at Castletown, on the north coast of Caithness, occupies an extensive site which at one point comprised several quarries, a cutting yard, a wind-powered water pump, a harbour, and numerous houses. Since the decline of the industry, many of the associated buildings have been demolished; those that remain (which are largely worker's houses) lie derelict and disused (Figure 5.33).

Like the cooperage, the flagstone works were built from stone that was quarried on site, containing large, high volumes which spanned the width of



the building; unlike the cooperage, there are many openings in the exterior, which, due to the removal of the windows and the depth of the spaces, appeared completely black, giving little clue as to what was inside, but while providing the occasional vista through the buildings to the environment beyond (Figure 5.34). Inside, the structure (once lined with timber and plaster) was completely exposed, opening storeys and rooms up to one another (Figure 5.35), whilst still evoking a strong sense of enclosure.



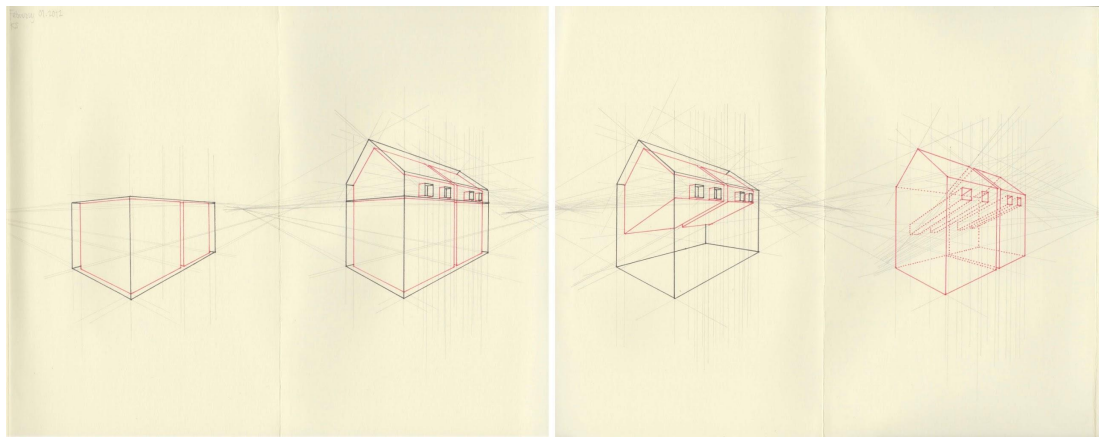
**Figure 5.34** Vista, workers house



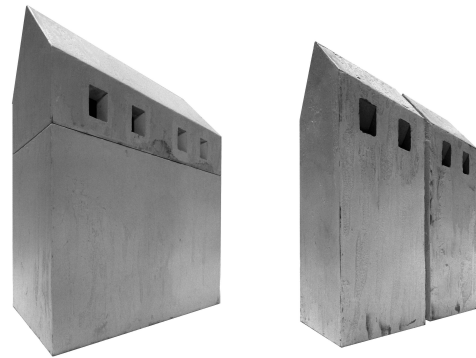
**Figure 5.35** Interior, workers house

By January 2012 I had begun developing work for the exhibition, and had also written the opening chapter of this thesis; with the impact of the visual bias within contemporary architecture and architectural practice in the Western world emerging as a critical theme, my thoughts were very much on the importance of the haptic connection provided by drawing and making. Reading that perspectival representation promoted a distance between the subject and both the viewer and the creator of the image (Bryson, 1983; Pallasmaa, 2005; Ronen, 2002) had caught me somewhat off guard. Despite knowing that perspective drawing offered a view that was unattainable, in reality it had never occurred to me that, as the result of a haptic process, it could encourage such detachment of people from place. Although contrary to my architectural ideals, the visual bias of perspective and its placement of 'a screen between the eye and the object' (Ronen, 2002, p.150) were issues that I had a strong interest in exploring.

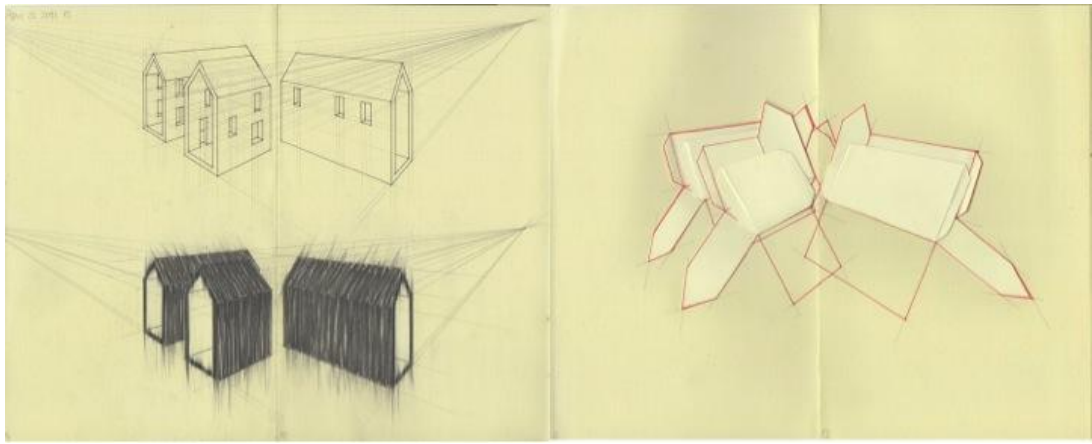
Contemplating the widespread visual bias of contemporary architecture through exploring the paradoxical translation of the unattainable, distancing view offered by perspective drawing into physical, three-dimensional, hand-built form, I developed hand-drawn perspective studies of both places, simultaneously considering issues such as openings, voids, shadows, and orientation. Following this came a series of maquettes, both in paper and in cardboard, directly translated from and exploring the same issues as these initial investigative drawings (Figures 5.36 - 5.39). Figure 5.36 documents how the form of the cooperage has changed over time, exploring the abstraction of light and shadow (influenced by the experience of the conditions in Figure 5.32) in relation to the historic form of the building and the negative space it once contained.



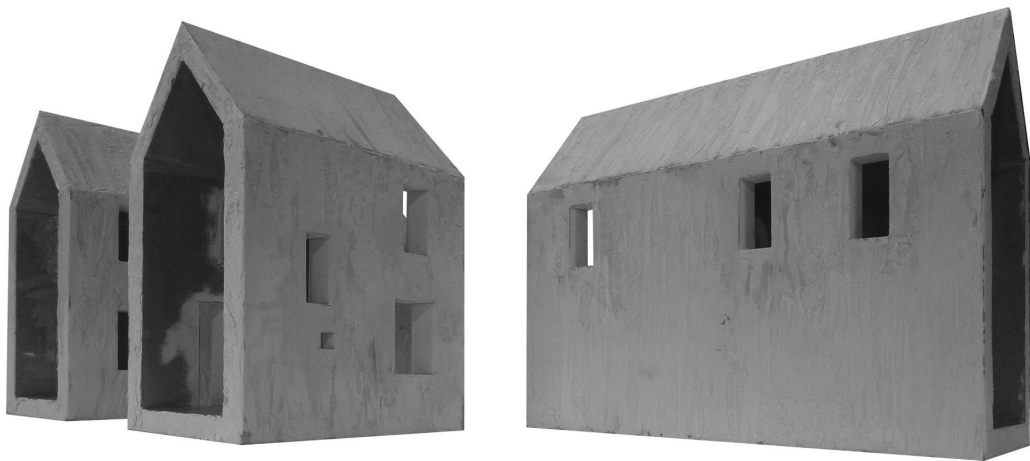
**Figure 5.36** Cooperage, Lybster, sketchbook entry (February 2012)



**Figure 5.37** *Cooperage, Lybster: Maquettes 1 and 2*  
Directly corresponding with the drawings above in Figure 5.35, both maquettes contain internal voids exploring and abstracting the presence of light within the form of the building.



**Figure 5.38** Flagstone Works, Castletown, sketchbook entry (April 2012)



**Figure 5.39** *Flagstone Works, Castletown: Maquette 3*  
Developed in response to my experience of the derelict workers houses, these maquettes aim to communicate a sense of enclosure within the tall, empty volumes of these buildings

My ambition had been to directly translate the cardboard in Figures 5.37 and 5.39 into glass, having assumed that it would be relatively straightforward to invest them in refractory moulds, gently burn out the cardboard and then cast the forms in glass. However, given both my relative inexperience and the complexity of these forms, it transpired that this, although not impossible, would undoubtedly be fraught with difficulty and sizeable risk. Although having decided to set aside this task for the meantime and to preserve the cardboard maquettes for inclusion in the exhibition, I remained curious as to how the forms would appear in glass; investing an older development model and then gently burning it out of the mould, I cast one of the maquettes using scrap glass, not expecting that the mould (or the piece, for that matter) would survive the lengthy firing in the kiln. The result, however, was quite unexpected and exciting, encouraging me that this would be a direction worth persevering with in the future (Figure 5.40).



**Figure 5.40**     *Flagstone Works, Castletown: Maquette 3 - test piece*

Intent on casting perspectival forms (albeit simplified versions), I returned to model making, replicating the negative space of each building in cardboard, before burning out the forms from the mould ahead of casting. In these two instances, the colour choice represents the tonal differences present in the stone local to each setting, exploring the interaction of light and its impact on the resulting atmosphere (Figures 5.41 and 5.42).



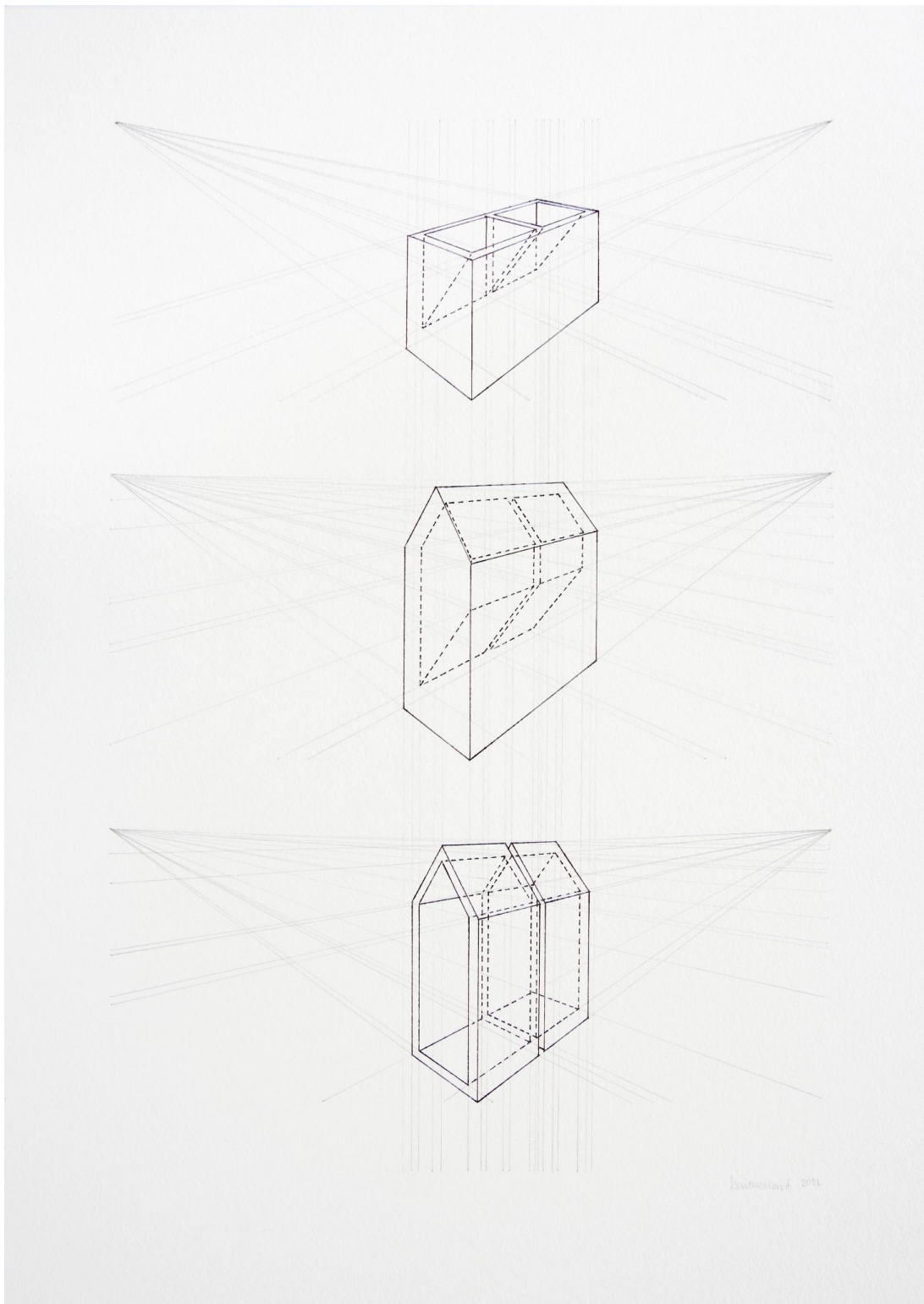
**Figure 5.41** *Flagstone Works, Castletown: Maquette 5*  
2012, kilnformed glass, 170(h) x 445(l) x 150(w) mm  
Photographer: Fergus Mather



**Figure 5.42** *Cooperage, Lybster: Maquette 3*  
2012, kilnformed glass, 190(h) x 150(l) x 55(w) mm (installed)  
Photographer: Fergus Mather

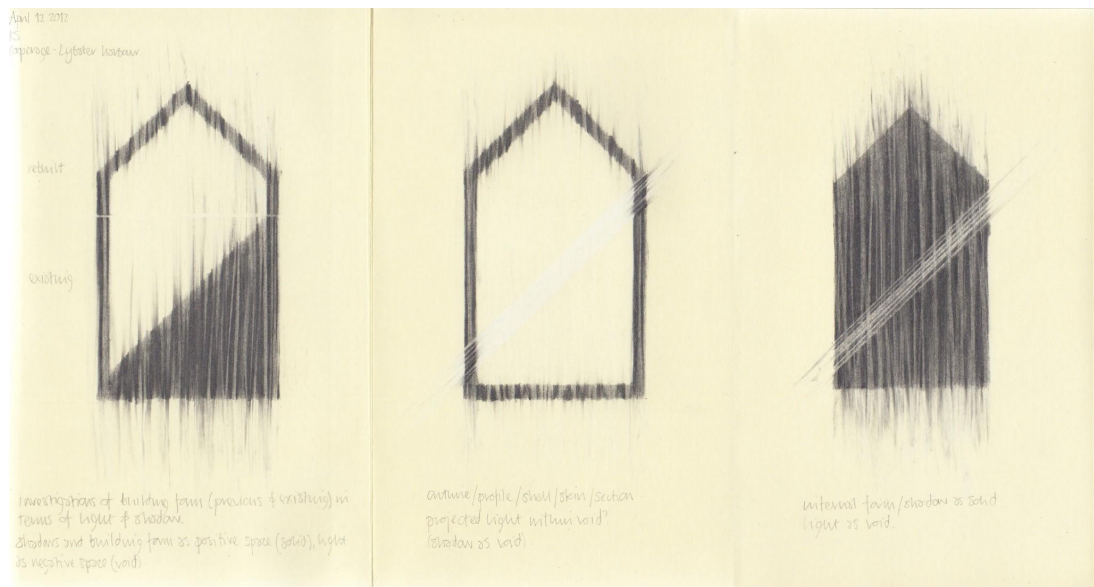
The back-and-forth nature of creating these pieces had brought my thinking back around to the relationship between positive and negative volumes, shifting the emphasis from the negative spaces I had just cast to the forms that could have once enveloped them (Figure 5.43). Over the previous months, I had often thought about the geometric shadow within the cooperage, and in particular about the dialogue between the relative permanence of the historic building form and the transience of the shadow it contained; in response, I had documented and abstracted my memory of the experience in both a perspectival drawing and a series of sketch sections (Figures 5.44 and 5.46). Corresponding to these are the pieces shown in Figures 5.45 and 5.47, which explore the transition from drawing on paper to lathe engraving on glass. Directly translated from my sketches, these pieces were created by cutting and pre-fusing black and white sheet glass (representing the forms created by the shadow and light respectively), over which finely granulated black glass was evenly applied prior to a second firing at a much lower temperature. What resulted were numerous thin, flat forms, the textured black surfaces of which were then cut on the lathe in series of freehand, gestural movements that, in mimicking the method employed in the original drawings, revealed the white surface beneath. Similar principles were applied to a drawn study of the gable end typologies of the workers cottages at Castletown (Figure 5.48), only this time with the fused sheets representing the external skin of the building in black, and the space contained within them in amber (Figure 5.49); at the forefront of my mind when producing these works on paper and in glass was how these houses could have once appeared from the outside when they were inhabited - a marked contrast to the blackness of the openings as they are now. Suggesting the illusion of depth through mark making and the juxtaposition of transparent and opaque glass, the three components were, in addition, hung clear of the wall in order that light and shadow could be both projected and reflected through each.



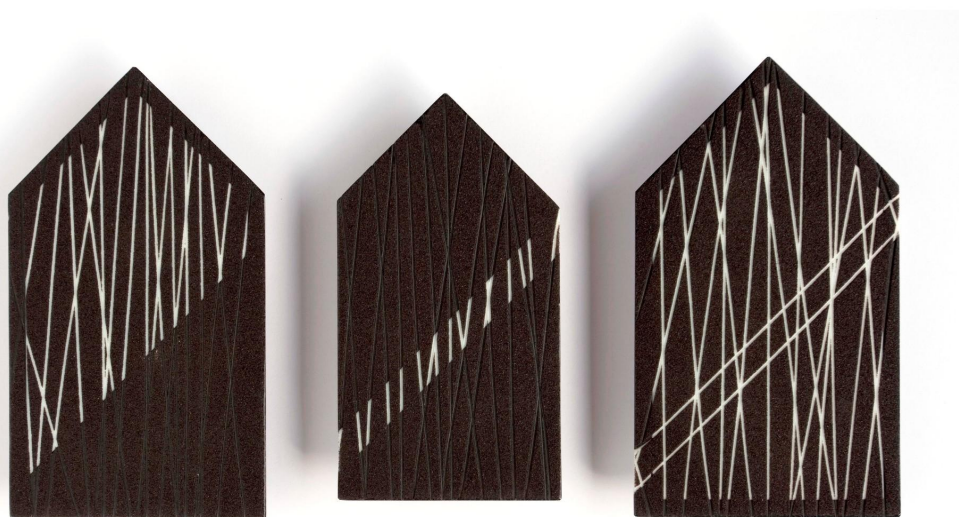


**Figure 5.43** *Cooperage, Lybster: Perspective Study*  
2012, graphite on cartridge paper, 610(h) x 465(l) x 35(w) mm (framed)  
Photographer: Fergus Mather

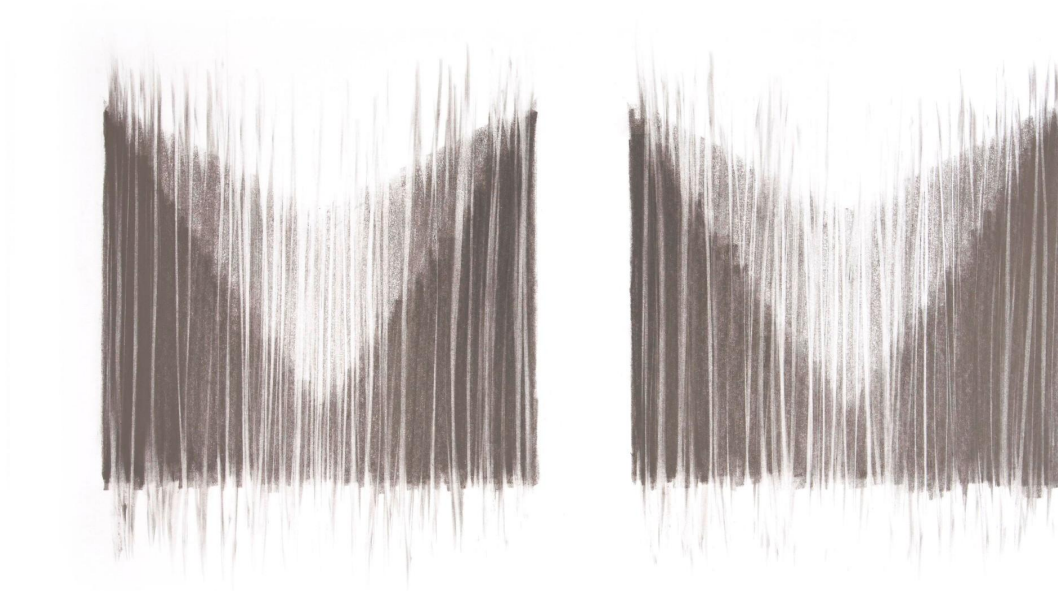




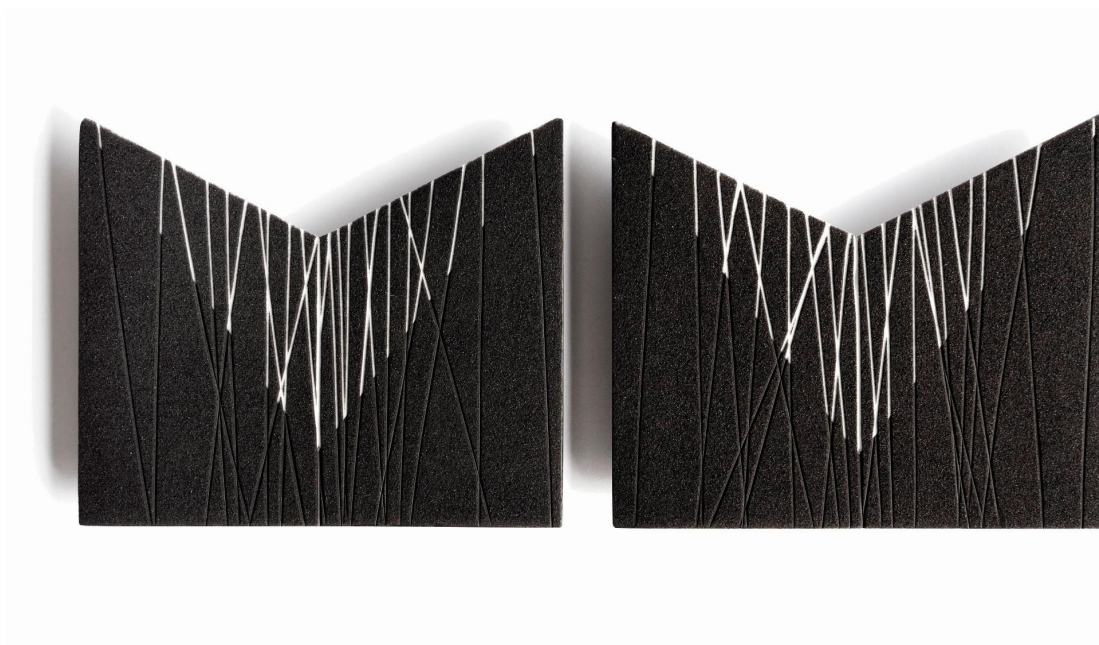
**Figure 5.44** Cooperage, Lybster, sketchbook entry (April 2012)



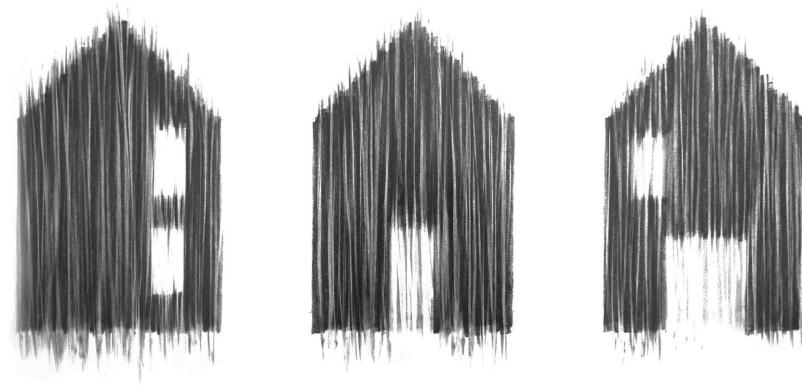
**Figure 5.45** Cooperage, Lybster: Sections  
2012, kilnformed glass, 180(h) x 420(l) x 20(w) mm (installed)  
Photographer: Fergus Mather



**Figure 5.46** *Cooperage, Lybster (September 21, 2011: 16.02 PM)*  
 2012, graphite on cartridge paper, 475(h) x 610(l) x 15(w) mm (framed)  
 Photographer: Fergus Mather



**Figure 5.47** *Cooperage, Lybster (September 21, 2011: 16.02 PM)*  
 2012, kilnformed glass, 150(h) x 380(l) x 20(w) mm (installed)  
 Photographer: Fergus Mather



**Figure 5.48** *Flagstone Works, Castletown: Elevations*  
2012, graphite on cartridge paper, 470(h) x 675(l) x 15(w) mm (framed)  
Photographer: Fergus Mather



**Figure 5.49** *Flagstone Works, Castletown: Elevations*  
2012, kilnformed glass, 160(h) x 370(l) x 20(w) mm (installed)  
Photographer: Fergus Mather

Like the cooperage, the empty volume and exposed structure of the houses at the flagstone works had, to me, encouraged a heightened awareness of both human scale and the materiality of the building form; almost every aspect of these houses was constructed from Caithness stone that had been quarried on site - from the walls and lintels to the water tanks and flooring. Despite the numerous windows, the spaces contained within each of these houses are made dense with shadow by the thickness of the walls and the proportion of the form; by contrast, a small, single-storey addition (now roofless) on the end of one house lends itself to a sense of scale that is more intimate and inviting (Figures 5.33 and 5.50).

Despite being much smaller in size and with considerably less sense of enclosure, the power of materiality within this space is no less potent. The daylight allows you to see the various applications and tactile qualities of the stone more clearly, seeming to invite you to touch and study the surfaces; acknowledging this relationship between the body and the environment, I photographed what I felt were key aspects of the space, returning at a later date to take a series of surface impressions from the same surfaces, which were then cast in glass (Figures 5.50 and 5.51) - a process which was also repeated at the cooperage (Figures 5.52 and 5.53).

Communicating memories of an aging environment at a particular moment in time, the components of these triptychs were exhibited at the height and planar orientation at which each of the original impressions were taken, demonstrating their relationship both to one another and to the body; to enable the viewer to further understand something of the experience, the form of each space was replicated within the gallery, abstracted in their construction from plinths and partitions (Figures 5.54 and 5.55).

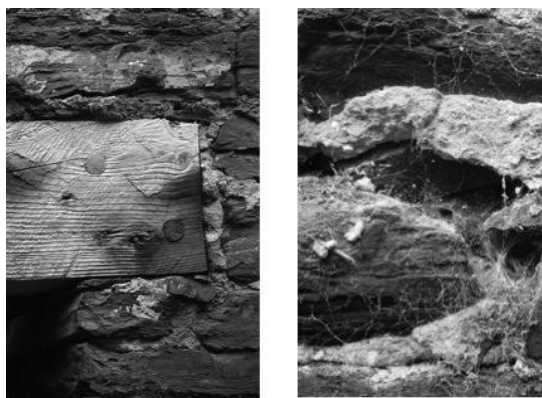




**Figure 5.50** Flagstone Works, Castletown - characteristics and surface studies



**Figure 5.51** *Flagstone Works, Castletown: Sill, Wall, Mantlepiece*  
 2012, kilnformed glass, triptych - dimensions variable  
 Photographer: Fergus Mather



**Figure 5.52** Cooperage, Lybster - characteristics and surface studies



**Figure 5.53** *Cooperage, Lybster: Threshold, Lintel, Wall*  
2012, kilnformed glass, triptych - dimensions variable  
Photographer: Fergus Mather



**Figure 5.54** Installation, Bullseye Gallery  
Photographer: Michael Endo, Bullseye Gallery



**Figure 5.55** Partial installation of *Flagstone Works, Castletown* triptych, Bullseye Gallery  
Photographer: Michael Endo, Bullseye Gallery

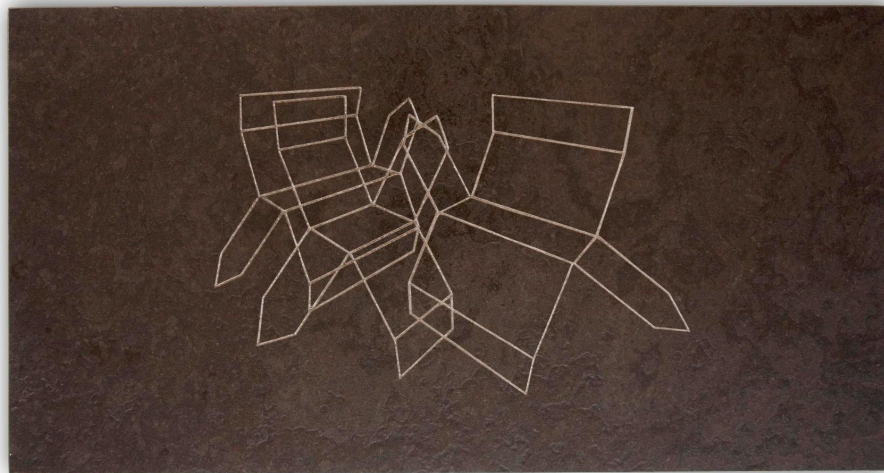
The forms that comprise both the workers dwellings and the cooperage have been altered over the decades, both by human intervention and by the passage of time, with their exteriors marked with evidence of former structures (Figure 5.56); this, highlighting the dialogue between mark-making and materiality, left a notable impression, and (in tandem with my interest in the distancing impact of perspective) was an influence in the development of my earliest drawn studies (Figures 5.36 and 5.38).

Suggesting the unfolded envelope of the buildings in its various states of existence, these working drawings (through which I had been able to understand the construction of the maquettes) were sandblasted into the surface of two pieces of dressed and polished Caithness stone, providing a contextual reference to both materiality and construction, whilst exploring form and the enclosure of space (Figures 5.57 and 5.58).

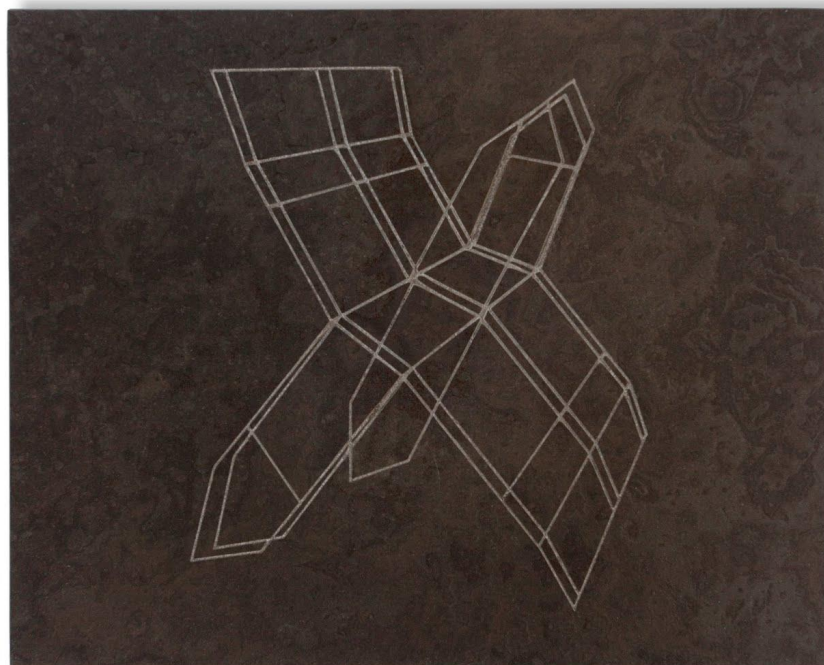


**Figure 5.56** Traces of former structures, Flagstone Works, Castletown



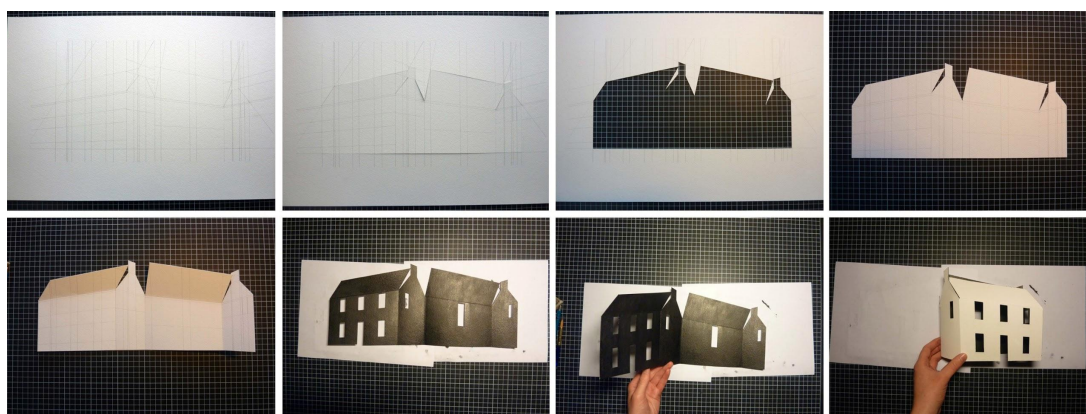


**Figure 5.57** *Flagstone Works, Castletown: Perspective Study (Deconstruction)*  
 2012, dressed, polished and sandblasted Caithness stone, 215(h) x 390(l) x 20(w) mm  
 Photographer: Fergus Mather

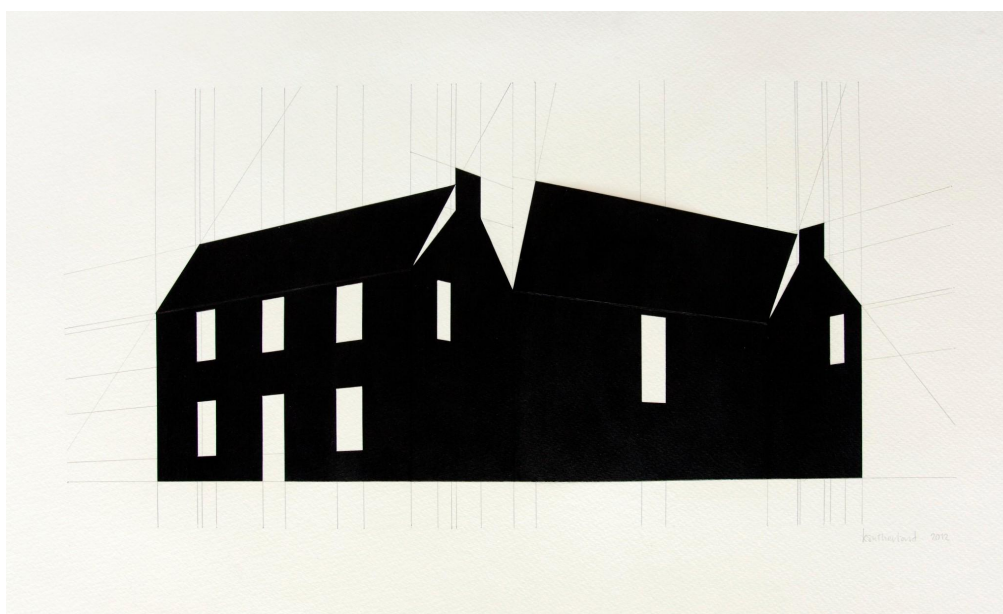


**Figure 5.58** *Cooperage, Lybster: Perspective Study (Deconstruction)*  
 2012, dressed, polished and sandblasted Caithness stone, 210(h) x 260(l) x 20(w) mm  
 (installed)  
 Photographer: Fergus Mather

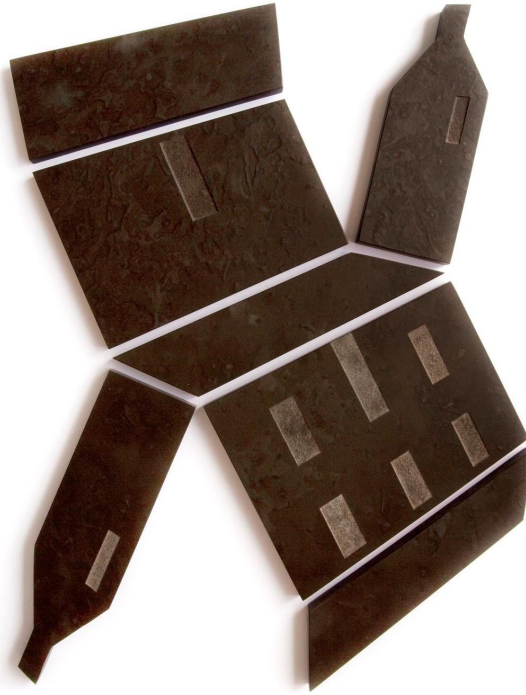
The realisation of these pieces also marked a return to my explorations of Harbour House; revisiting it in light of my explorations into building skins and the power of materiality and history, I explored the form in a series of perspective studies, both on paper and in Caithness stone (Figures 5.59 - 5.62). Considering both the dominance of the vision versus the haptic connection involved in making (and their potential impact on detachment from and attachment to place respectively), these works also suggest and explore the paradoxical nature of the creation of perspectival forms.



**Figure 5.59** *Harbour House, Lybster: Perspective Study (Unfolded) - development*



**Figure 5.60** *Harbour House, Lybster: Perspective Study (Unfolded)*  
2012, graphite on cartridge paper, 430(h) x 665(l) x 15(w) mm (framed)  
Photographer: Fergus Mather



**Figure 5.61** *Harbour House, Lybster: Folding (Study 1)*  
 2012, dressed, polished and sandblasted Caithness stone, 12(h) x 305(l) x 405(w) mm  
 (installed)  
 Photographer: Fergus Mather



**Figure 5.62** *Harbour House, Lybster: Folding (Study 2)*  
 2012, dressed, polished and sandblasted Caithness stone, 205(h) x 180(l) x 12(w) mm  
 (installed)  
 Photographer: Fergus Mather

In terms of my personal creative practice, my response to this final group of places provide perhaps the most cohesive representation of how the four previously identified tensions between person and place could begin to be addressed through adopting a more haptic approach to architecture and design. As with earlier works, these pieces were instinctive explorations of the history and locality of various settings, communicating the significance of each place and the memory of my experience (see Caruso (2008, p.12) and Relph (1976, p.143), both cited in section 1.3). Present throughout is an acute awareness of the material expression of these buildings - all constructed from Caithness stone that was quarried on site, and all carrying clues with regard to their age, previous inhabitants and use (refer to citation of Gooding, Putnam & Smith (1997) and Pallasmaa (2005) in section 1.4); inherently capable of fostering a sense of meaning, 'buildings are memorials to the engagements of mind with place involved in their construction and alteration over time', Sharr (2007, p.70) observes. Unlike the earlier pieces, these works are a direct and conscious response to my theoretical research, and to my realization of the impact of our visual bias on contemporary architectural practice, particularly in relation to our detachment from the body and the senses, and from methods of representation and communication.

In contrast to the reductive, functional approach of modern architecture (Tschumi, 1981), where the body is viewed objectively and is subject to homogenized assumptions of size and motion (Franck & Lepori, 2007, p.25; Schribner, 1997), works such as *Flagstone Works*, *Castletown: Sill, Wall, Mantlepiece* and *Cooperage, Lybster: Threshold, Lintel, Wall* convey a considered response to sensory experience and memory through documenting the tactility of particular surfaces and their relationship with the body.

Uniting almost all of the works discussed within this subsection is my interest in the visual bias promoted by perspective drawing; as was noted earlier, despite understanding that such representations were (by nature) unrealistic, I was taken aback when I realised that what was essentially a

haptic process was capable of contributing to a sense of detachment from place. In response, the resulting work explores the paradox offered by these three-dimensional representations of physically unattainable views, creating maquettes influenced by personal experiences of place whilst exploring the role of perspective in the placement of 'a screen between the eye and the object' (see Ronen (2002, p.150) as cited in section 1.6).

*Having initially visited North Lands with the sole intention of observing the responses of visiting artists to Lybster and its surrounding context, to find myself in the position that I am in now - academically, creatively, and personally speaking - is a complete surprise. The chance application for a place on a master class altered the course of this research and the scope of my creative practice, whilst allowing, through making, the opportunity for both a personal reacquaintance with place and a deeper understanding and appreciation of its inherent power. Enthralled by glass from the outset, the unfamiliar processes of making in this new material challenged my architectural approach to space and light, highlighting the haptic deficit that is all too common within contemporary architectural practice. Subsequent participation in residencies, symposiums, exhibitions and conferences encouraged regular reflection upon my own experience of and creative response to place, revealing the dialogue between the generalized theoretical background and the specific cultural context of this research, and, as a consequence, the role of the architect as a conduit between the two.*

*Discussing (in a loosely chronological order) the places I have drawn influence from and the work that has resulted, this chapter has illustrated how a more considered, haptic approach to architecture could aid a reattachment to place through addressing the tensions that exist within our architectural approach to: history and locality; materiality and meaningful form; the body and the senses; and methods of representation and communication.*

*Referring to the context-specific elements of this research as an example, the next chapter will explore the potential interpretation and application of the theoretical propositions that compose the author's strategy for architectural practice.*



## **6      Synthesis: ‘Always, first: it happened’. (Gunn, 1956, p.11)**

*The primary purpose of this body of research has been to explore a generalized and non context-specific architectural design strategy that addresses the as-yet unresolved sense of detachment from place felt throughout the Western world; facilitating the translation of prominent place-related theories from the field of environmental psychology for use within the discipline of architectural design, this thesis has aimed to offer the architectural profession a valuable tool through which a sense of place and attachment to place can begin to be more effectively understood and potentially created.*

*This chapter, the first of two documenting the culmination of this body of work, will open with an overview of the thesis. Using the context of North Lands Creative Glass as an example, a reflection on the interpretation and application of the propositions underpinning this strategy will begin to illustrate an alternative approach to design which could aid a deeper understanding of place through the identification of its defining features. Referring further to her context-specific explorations, the author will then close this chapter by briefly discussing literature, light and the haptic connection as sources of narrative capable of aiding a recovery from our detached condition.*

*Following this the final chapter of this thesis will move away from context-specific examples, drawing out a series of generalized and replicable propositions for architectural practice which together comprise the author’s developing strategy for place.*

## **6.1     *Compressed Summary of the Theoretical Narrative***

Voicing his concern regarding the current condition and capitalist tendencies of the Western world, the architectural historian Kenneth Frampton observes that 'should we stop, there are few places within which many of us might significantly choose to be' (1974, p.443); despite 'certain devastating phenomena of this century [bringing] with them, by aftershock as it were, a revitalized sensitivity to place' (Casey, 1997, p.xiii) many architects - their creative process conditioned by modern architecture's legacy of 'confusion and crisis' (Norberg-Schulz, 1983, p.437) - exhibit difficulty in the creation of place (Nesbitt, 1996), producing instead an abstracted, uninviting and egotistical architecture unrelated to the realities and needs of human life.

With our culture dominated by a visual bias, the environments we create often lack 'sympathetic invitation' through which feelings of attachment can be fostered (Sennett, 2006, p.109); the absence of the haptic touch and over-reliance on technology in architectural practice (particularly in the early stages of design) greatly encourages a distance between the architect and the actualities of context and site, consequently facilitating the production of an insincere architecture based upon abstracted and incorrect projections (Pallasmaa, 2005).

Developing partly in response to the widespread 'contemporary societal problems' that were attributed to the impact of modernism, environmental psychology (within which the topic of place remains an increasingly popular area of study) emerged from within the field of psychology in the 1950s (Bonnes & Secchiaroli, 1995; Hernández, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace & Hess, 2007). Substantiating the age-old supposition that 'a sense of place is a natural condition of human existence' (Buttimer, 1980; Heidegger, 1962; Norberg-Schulz, 1979; Seamon, 1980; Tuan, 1975, 1977), recent findings from within this scientifically-based discipline indicate that a sense of place continues to be of great importance to both people and their communities (Gustafson, 2006; Janz, 2005; Kruger & Jakes, 2003; Terkenli, 1995),



regardless of our cultural condition and the ever-increasing number of non-places being created within it (Augé, 1995; Beatley, 2004).

Despite the interdisciplinary nature of environmental psychology and the obvious interests it shares with architecture, a significant degree of tension (which ultimately provided the impetus for this research) exists between the two; as Lawson (2005, p.86) notes, with their differences in methodology, approach and focus preventing a critical, reciprocally beneficial dialogue on how a sense of place and attachment could be fostered by architectural design, ‘the psychologists and sociologists have gone on researching and the designers designing, and [have] yet to re-educate each other into more genuinely collaborative roles’.

The first chapter of this thesis opened with an overview of the emergence and ideals of modernism, discussing the widespread sense of detachment from place that is often associated with the impact of this movement on contemporary architectural design and practice in the West. Following this came an introduction to critical regionalism (which advances itself as an apparent solution to our contemporary condition), with a particular emphasis on the manifesto of Kenneth Frampton, whose name is synonymous with this architectural theory. Influenced by her reading on both modernism and critical regionalism, the author identified four long-standing tensions (all attributable to the legacy of modernism and united by the dominance of our visual bias) which essentially compose this widespread disconnection between people and place. Evident throughout much contemporary architectural practice and design, these tensions reflect the extensive detachment of the architect (and, as a consequence, of those who inhabit or use their buildings) from: *history and locality; materiality and the construction of meaningful form; the body and the senses; and methods of representation and communication*. These tensions subsequently formed headings under which the impact of modernism and the goals of critical regionalism could then be discussed and compared with greater ease; following this, an in-depth critique revealed why critical regionalism would

be discounted as a potential remedy to our sense of detachment from place within the context of this research.

The second chapter located this body of work within the theory of environmental psychology, delivering a summarized history of this discipline before proceeding to highlight the difficulties it currently faces in developing working methods that are easily understood by those in relevant fields (such as architecture) (Lewicka, 2011). The place-theory of David Canter (1977) was introduced as a multidisciplinary approach which could allow the researcher and/or the designer to both uncover and understand the impact of the essential constituents of place (categorised as *physical attributes*, *conceptions* and *activities*)<sup>43</sup>; following a discussion of its potential, the author then outlined an apparent failure to employ Canter's method as an architectural design tool concerned with the study of the relationship between the physical components of an environment and the development of a sense of attachment to place.

The second section of this chapter provided a review of relevant place-related findings from within the field of environmental psychology, summarizing the development of place as a research interest before moving to discuss the definition of (and relationships between) place and its related constructs. The author highlighted the hypothesis that attachment to place is often predictable within restorative environments, which are recognized to address human emotional needs through permitting engagement with natural environments and allowing the opportunity for the regulation of emotion and self; following this came an introduction to Attention Restoration Theory (Kaplan, 1995), which (although outlining four key characteristics that such

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<sup>43</sup> This section of the chapter also touched upon the key differences between phenomenological and scientific enquiry. The latter is traditionally characterised as being systematic, measured, and quantitative, in contrast to the metaphorical and unpredictably variable approach of the former. Following the lead of Canter, who eschews phenomenological emphasis in favour of proposing a scientifically-grounded theory, this body of research was revealed to subscribe to the definition of place 'as a quality of a location' which is determined by 'the system of experience that incorporates the personal, social, and culturally significant aspects of situated activities' (Canter, 1996, p.117).

physical settings share - a sense of *being away*, *fascination*, *compatibility* and *extent*) also appears to have never been applied or explored in relation to architectural design.

In response, the third chapter opened by outlining the key aims and objectives of this thesis (as summarized in the introduction to this chapter), before proceeding to consider the relevant texts of both Canter and Kaplan (and their role within the context of this research) in greater depth. In a discussion of her emerging strategy, the author argued that, as people often assign meaning and form attachments to places which are considered to be restorative environments, it stands to reason that the conceptions of place gathered via Canter's approach could be aligned with the four categories of environmental characteristics identified by Kaplan (Figure 3.2). In addition, she argued that the role of the architect should be to act as a reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983) and a conduit for the 'narrative-like synthesis' (Entrikin, 1991, p.26) of architectural practice and the creation of place, located between the subjectivity of conceptions and the objectivity of the universal, scientific theories of environmental psychology. Next, having further underlined the often objective, self-referential, and visually biased nature of common architectural design methods (and their subsequent contribution to our sense of detachment from place), she proposed and advocated the employment of an alternative, haptic approach which draws upon relevant cultural influences, the conceptions of others and the personal place imagery of the architect (Downing, 1992a, 1992b, 1992c) in order to provide a greater opportunity for the creation of a genuine and sympathetic response to both people and place.

Revealing the context for the design component of this research, the fourth chapter began with a brief introduction to Lybster, Caithness, outlining both its past as a major Scottish herring port and its current reputation as the home of North Lands Creative Glass, an internationally renowned glass studio established in the mid 1990s. Illustrating the broad creative influence of Caithness, a significant portion of this chapter was dedicated to a

discussion of the work of the writer Neil M. Gunn, drawing comparison between some of his key texts (in particular *The Silver Darlings*) and the four categories of environmental characteristics that underpin Attention Restoration Theory (Kaplan, 1995). Through this analysis, the author placed Kaplan's universal scientific theory within the realms of a specific and more readily understandable context, employing Gunn as a storyteller to aid mediation between the subjectivity of personal experiences and the objectivity of Kaplan's theory.

Moving to discuss the present day creative influence of Lybster and its surroundings, this chapter concluded with a discussion on North Lands Creative Glass, summarizing its history, development and aims, before highlighting its current plans for expansion, which formed the architectural brief to which the creative practice of this research would respond. A selection of relevant artworks were discussed as examples of the powerful impact of the local environment and culture on visiting artists, before the North Lands permanent collection was revealed as the source of the conceptions of place within the context of this research.

The penultimate chapter documented the development of the practice-based component of this research, discussing the author's response to place in relation to her works (to date) in glass, mixed media and on paper, all of which were influenced by her changing relationship with her hometown of Lybster, Caithness. These pieces were also discussed in parallel with the four tensions identified at the outset of this thesis, indicating how a reevaluation of our approach to architectural practice and design could offer something of a recovery from the visual bias and widespread sense of detachment from place exhibited within the Western world.

## **6.2 Towards a Strategy for Place**

*This section of the thesis will open by discussing the interpretation and application of the theories of Canter (1977) and Kaplan (1995) as tools to aid the identification of key place-defining features and characteristics within the context of North Lands Creative Glass, Lybster. Following this, the metaphorical reflections of Neil Gunn (whose texts this thesis has previously employed in the study and contextual translation of Attention Restoration Theory) will then be discussed as alternative approaches to architectural design and as potential aids in addressing the key tensions between people and place that were identified at the outset of this body of work. Reflecting upon the role of narrative in informing an understanding and sense of place, the author will then move to consider literature and light as key sources of influence within the context of this research.*

### **6.2.1 Generalized Theories and the Specificity of Place: Canter and Kaplan in the Context of North Lands Creative Glass**

As has been noted, both Canter (1977) and Kaplan (1995) present generalized theories relating to the affinity between a person and their physical surroundings, emphasizing (both directly and indirectly) the essential role of key environmental characteristics in the development of a sense of place and attachment. Despite this, neither theory appears to have been explored or applied in relation to the design of architecture. The following discussion highlights the key features of both Canter's (1977) tripartite model for place and Kaplan's (1995) Attention Restoration Theory; continuing to use the context of North Lands Creative Glass as an example, the author will reveal how these theories can be understood, applied and linked within the context of a specific physical environment, indicating how key place-defining features and characteristics could be identified for use in the future creation of architecture conducive to a sense of both place and attachment.

### **6.2.1.1      *Canter's Metaphor for Place***

Attributing our ailing contemporary condition to 'the increasing international homogeneity' of architecture and our abuse of our own environment, Canter's place theory advocates the countering of modernism's detrimental legacy 'through the creation of place more appropriate to [its] inhabitants' (1977, p.5). In order that this may be achieved, he proposes a '[v]isual metaphor for the nature of places' (1977, p.158) - a tripartite model (Figure 3.1) which enables an accurate understanding of both an individual's response to and interpretation of their surrounding environment through allowing the key physical constituents of that particular place to be uncovered and explored. Canter argues that procedures such as this, which aid the identification of place-defining elements, can 'provide a valuable link to design decision making' (1977, p.161). Through permitting the architect an accurate insight into the subjective perceptions of the eventual inhabitants or users (rather than relying solely on their own objective and often inaccurate assumptions when designing), the possibility for a 'mismatch between creator and user' (1977,p.4) is significantly lessened.

Place cannot be truly understood without first identifying the relevant *physical attributes, activities* and *conceptions* of which they are composed, Canter (1986, p.8) observes; sharing equally mutual and reciprocal relationships within Canter's tripartite model, any one of these three integrated components (the presence and absence of which within the context of North Lands Creative Glass will be discussed subsequently) could be used as a starting point in uncovering '[the description] of what is psychologically significant about a place' (1986, p.6).

#### **6.2.1.1.1      *Activities***

Of the three, the activities component is the least complex and the most self-explanatory; it addresses and relates to knowledge of '[the] behaviour [and

actions that are] associated with, or [are] anticipated will be housed in, a given locus' (1977, p.159).

As the fourth chapter revealed, as this body of research began, the Board of Directors of North Lands Creative Glass were seeking funding for the renovation of St. Mary's Church, in Lybster, where they hoped to house additional facilities (see Appendix 2) for the centre. Unfortunately, in 2011 this was deemed economically unfeasible; at the time of writing, the Board of Directors are exploring the possibility of locating this new accommodation within the grounds of the Old School house and the Alastair Pilkington Studio. Although it is evident that additional working space for artists will be central to their expansion, both North Lands' budget and brief are currently under review, and remain largely undefined. As a consequence, and due to the importance of avoiding incorrect projections regarding the needs of others, the activities component of Canter's tripartite model will not be discussed in relation to North Lands Creative Glass, even speculatively; despite this, however, guidance to exploring and uncovering this component of place (drawn from Canter's place theory) will be suggested and outlined later in this thesis, in a critical summary of the author's non context-specific strategy for architectural practice.

#### **6.2.1.1.2      *Physical Attributes***

Canter's description of the physical attributes component ('the physical parameters of [the] setting' (1977, p.159)) is somewhat lacking in clarity, and it is not immediately obvious whether he is discussing the characteristics of the relevant (and presumably yet to be built) architectural form or the existing environment that surrounds it; reading on, it appears (although, again, not explicitly) as though he could be discussing both simultaneously - perhaps intentionally, so that his model remains generalized, or perhaps of a consequence of its underdevelopment and lack of exploration as a strategy. Although recognizing that not all architectural projects are necessarily new-

builds, the author proposes - for the sake of clarity and thoroughness - two strands of exploration within the physical attributes component, relating to the existing environmental surroundings of the project and to the yet to be created (or altered, in the instance that it is pre-existing) architectural form.

As has been previously highlighted in relation to activities, the absence of a brief within the context of this research has also hampered the exploration of relevant physical attributes in relation to North Lands Creative Glass, albeit to a lesser degree; whilst in this instance there can currently be no evidence-based exploration of physical parameters in relation to existing or ideal architectural forms, a substantial number of responses to the surrounding environmental context are already in existence in the artworks composing the North Lands Creative Glass permanent collection. Through producing unguided responses to their conceptions of the Lybster locale, the contributing artists have (unknowingly) made it possible to identify those environmental characteristics and components that are central to the sense of place experienced by many who visit North Lands. Elaborating on this link between physical attributes and conceptions of place, Canter (1977, pp. 159-160) observes: 'whatever the [physical] variables [within any given location] turn out to be, we may start looking for them by examining the conceptions which people have and the groupings which emerge from those conceptions, followed by a search for the physical attributes linked to those groupings'.

Due to the manner in which these constituents of Canter's model appear inseparably bound, they will be discussed together (in the context of North Lands) under the subheading of conceptions. As with the activities component, despite the exploration of Canter's model in relation to the physical attributes of place being greatly restricted by the absence of a brief and site in this instance, a generalized approach to this component and its connected processes will later be outlined in relation in a concise summary of the author's strategy for place.



### 6.2.1.1.3 *Conceptions*

Described as ‘the descriptions [or perceptions] which people hold of that [...] physical environment’ (Canter, 1977, p.159), the *conceptions* component of Canter’s model for place (which highlights the likelihood of a ‘mismatch between creator and user’ (1977, p.4)) contains inherent potential in not only uncovering and understanding relevant impressions of place, but also in discouraging the architect from relying solely on their own objective assumptions when designing.

In response to the inevitable diversity of perceptions of place within a group (and the subsequent impossibility of satisfying each individual’s personal needs equally), Canter places emphasis on unearthing and responding to the commonalities found within the conceptions of the primary occupants or users of the place in question. He argues that this can be achieved through the analysis of unguided observations and cognitive representations (which could, for example, be communicated through descriptions (verbal or written) and sketches, respectively), but stresses that a high level of care and attention must be applied in the selection of the appropriate method; ‘the effectiveness of the eventual environmental modification will depend to a certain extent on whether the designer has effectively uncovered the appropriate conceptual system’, he writes (1977, p.125).

As a reflection of the strength with which the two are linked, the author proposes that the *conceptions* component, like that relating to the *physical attributes* of the place in question, should be treated as having two corresponding strands of investigation - the first involving the consideration of the existing environmental context in general, and the second involving the more specific consideration of the relevant architectural form, regardless of whether it is pre-existing or not. As with the *physical attributes* component, the second of these strands, due to circumstances beyond the author’s control, is currently unable to be explored in this instance; as a result, the following discussion will focus on the potential application of

Canter's model in the identification and exploration of the conceptions of place generated in response to the surrounding environment and context of Lybster, Caithness.

Although Canter highlighted multiple ways in which *conceptions* of place can be uncovered, in the instance of this body of research, as was previously discussed, they existed already - in the form of artworks donated to North Lands Creative Glass by former artistic directors, master class leaders, artists-in-residence and students. With the vast majority of the collection held in storage due to the lack of exhibition space, its contents remain largely unknown to many; however, a selection, representing a cross-section of the donations, have been documented in *Reflections: A Decade of North Lands Creative Glass*. Due to the obvious difficulties in viewing the works first-hand, this publication has been key in providing a sample of the artists' conceptions of place. Although many of the photographs documenting these pieces are accompanied by brief descriptions of the work, only those pieces that the author knew to be created directly in response to the context of Caithness were referred to, lessening the opportunity for false projections and assumptions to be made.

Analysing these 21 identified artworks, the author assigned each a series of keywords which described their particular environmental or cultural inspiration, as can be seen at the foot of each page in Appendix 3; these keywords were then grouped together in accordance to their commonalities, revealing a hierarchy of categories of influence. In descending order of popularity, within this selection of pieces the most prominent categories of conceptions are: history/industry/fishing/sea (10 direct references); wildlife/living creatures/nature (seven direct references, of which six can be directly linked to the sea and sea life); vernacular architecture/architectural form (five direct references); geology/coast/landscape/topography (four direct references); elements/weather/sun/light (three direct references); and cultural tradition (one direct reference).

Although North Lands' change in circumstances have led to only a partial exploration of Canter's model for place being possible, the *conceptions* component alone has, in facilitating and guiding the identification of a number of key place-defining physical variables, provided a valuable insight into the potential contained within this approach to understanding and creating place. Drawing upon Canter's guidance, the next step in this process would be to identify (within a given site and its surrounding context), links to the relevant environmental and physical features that could influence or be incorporated into the architectural design project in question; it should be reiterated that whilst such speculation is beyond the realm of this research, the *conceptions* component of Canter's model (and indeed the model and its approach as a whole) will shortly be discussed further in relation to its role in the author's non site-specific strategy for place.

#### **6.2.1.2      *Conceptions of Place: A Dialogue with Kaplan's Attention Restoration Theory***

Discussing the 'life-changing experience' (Page, 2006, p.55; Klein, 2006a, 2006b) that the context of Lybster has been observed to offer to visiting artists, the fourth chapter of this thesis also highlighted the author's initial realisation of a potential connection between such powerful occurrences and the qualities and conditions offered by restorative environments (Kaplan, 1995); describing the impact of his own personal experience as well as that of many others, Klein (2006a, p.21) - in a statement immediately relatable to the relationship between restorative environments and the process of self-regulation - muses that

'[m]aybe, compared to the frenetic pace of our contemporary life there is something precious about the ageless isolation in that part of Scotland that universally focuses the awareness and somehow stills the mind to question, to make new connections'.

Representative of conceptions of place, the artworks shared in *Reflections: A Decade of North Lands Creative Glass* are documented primarily through

images, with little or no accompanying text; consequently, despite North Lands' reputation for permitting powerful experiences, it would be inappropriate to assume that all of the artists highlighted in Appendix 3 would have had a life-altering encounter similar to that of Klein. However, as will subsequently be argued, a clear comparison can be drawn between their conceptions of place and the environmental qualities (*compatibility*, *being away*, *fascination* and *extent*) outlined by Kaplan in his Attention Restoration Theory (1995). Supporting the author's hypothesis for the potential interlinking of the theories of Kaplan and Canter (1977), this indicates that such contextual features could be capable of encouraging and supporting not only attention restoration and self-regulation, but, as a consequence, the development of attachment bonds between people and place.

Page (2006, p.55) notes the remoteness and rural isolation of Lybster to play a significant role in 'the allure of North Lands Creative Glass'. Klein (2006a, p.18) agrees, observing that '[i]n Lybster a glass artist can enjoy what amounts to total immersion [...] [t]here is nothing to distract you and everything to inspire you'. Through meeting the needs of the individual and supporting 'activities that are intrinsically enjoyable' (Kaplan, 1983, p.327), a high level of *compatibility* between person and place is exhibited, strengthening the supposition that the Lybster locale offers the opportunity for restorative experience.

The geographical remoteness of Lybster suggests that, for many, North Lands provides both a physical and conceptual sense of *being away*, offering a 'change of scenery' (Kaplan, 1983, p.327) from 'the frenetic pace' of everyday life that Klein describes (2006a, p.21). Allowing the individual to be 'physically or mentally removed from [everyday] activities that are attentionally demanding' (Oulette et al., 2005, p.176), such restorative environments are acknowledged to occur most frequently within natural, rural landscapes (such as those referenced in the work of Scott Benefield (p.250), Sandy Gellis (p.253) Loretta Lowman (p.257), Gabie Kienle (p.255)

and Nick Wirdnam (p.268)).

As we have read, such settings are also rich in opportunity for *fascination*, ‘facilitating involuntary attention [and therefore regenerating one’s capacity for directed attention] by the intrinsic interest of the situation’ (Oullette et al., 2005, p.176); often associated with process (such as the observation of unfamiliar animals - see works by Adrienne McStay (p.259), Patricia Niemann (p.260) and Lotte Thorsøe (p.265)), fascination also frequently occurs in response to captivating physical features of a setting such as historical ruins or unusual architectural forms, as can be seen in the work of Bernard Dejonghe (p.252), Steve Klein (p.256), Ted Sawyer (p.263) and Kate Williams (p.267). Kaplan (1993, 1995) identifies two contrasting categories of fascination - ‘hard’ and ‘soft’, the latter of which is acknowledged to be experienced within natural environments where captivating processes such as patterns of light, clouds, and sunsets (see Peter Aldrige’s *Ring of Brodgar* (p.249)), movement of trees in the wind (Sean O’Neill’s *Sol* (p.261)), and rhythms of the sea (Naoko Sato’s *Wave* (p.262)) occur naturally.

In addition, the presence of *extent* - ‘giving one the sense of being somewhere with sufficient scope that one can dwell there for a while, whether or not the physical place is vast’ (Oullette et al., 2005, p.176) promises the individual (through the presence of historical references and features, such as those that influenced the work of Katharine Coleman (p.251), Denis Mann (p.258) and Marea Timoko (p.266), for example), ‘that there might be more to explore than is immediately evident’ (Korpela, 2012, p.33).

These parallels between the conceptions of place and Attention Restoration Theory have been brought to light by a unique set of cultural and theoretical circumstances. Although tentatively drawn as a result, they are illustrative of and support the author’s hypothesis for the interlinking of the theories of Canter (1977) and Kaplan (1995) in a developing architectural strategy for the understanding and creation of place; the presence of these theories in the North Lands experience has been explored in order to demonstrate not only

the potential connection and dialogue between the two, but to demonstrate their role in the author's strategy for place and its application in architectural design and practice, which will be summarized in due course.

### **6.2.2 Gunn's Search for *The Atom of Delight* as an Alternative Approach to Architectural Design**

The fourth chapter of this thesis discussed the presence of Attention Restoration Theory within the work of the author Neil M. Gunn, with particular reference to his texts *The Silver Darlings* (1969) and *The Atom of Delight* (1956); as previously discussed, in addition to lending support to the author's understanding of Attention Restoration Theory and its proposed connection with Canter's model for place, these texts also placed Kaplan's scientific theory within a familiar, relevant, and subsequently more relatable context whilst revealing several principles transferrable to the author's strategy for the understanding and creation of place.

Heavily underpinned by metaphor and symbolism, within *The Atom of Delight* Gunn describes the various stages of reflection employed in the quest for a deepened sense of self and identity<sup>44</sup>. Although contextually specific to the creative component of this research, the metaphorical 'reflections' (1956, p.9) outlined as being necessary to the hunt for 'the atom' (Gunn, 1956, p.13) extend beyond the life of the characters he portrays, communicating a broader philosophical approach to meaningful experience and its understanding.

'But every game hunt requires some preliminary reflections on the terrain, the aids and obstacles on the way, what destroys the scent or diverts the wind. Such reflections, indeed, can have a special kind of delight for every hunter who is sure that the quarry exists. Assuming our hunt has still got its quarry, [...] how do we pick

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<sup>44</sup> As noted in the fourth chapter of this thesis (pp.12-13), Gunn's description of 'the atom of delight' (1956, p.13) is directly comparable to the experience of self-regulation, the ultimate outcome and benefit of restorative experience (as outlined in Kaplan's Attention Restoration Theory (1995)), which has been recognised to play a significant role in the development and maintenance of a sense of attachment to place (Kaplan, 2001; Korpela et al., 2001).

up its spoor?’ (Gunn, 1956, p.9)

Applicable to the interstitial stance of the architect between the objectivity of architectural practice and the subjectivity of place, Gunn’s principles for ‘the hunt’ (1956, p.9) will briefly be discussed in relation to the author’s strategy for architectural design and practice; through referencing and weaving together salient points relating to architectural methodology, the key tensions present between people and place (as identified and outlined in the first chapter of this thesis) and the place-related findings of environmental psychology, the following section of this chapter will highlight how the application of Gunn’s ‘reflections’ could potentially guide our recovery from the sense of detachment that dominates architectural practice and design in the West<sup>45</sup>.

#### **6.2.2.1      ‘[A] cast back’ (Gunn, 1956, p.9)**

‘[T]hough the general direction, as in any sport, is forward, clues can be picked up by a cast back. But the backward cast becomes entirely nostalgic unless the clues are used in an actual hunt to-day and to-morrow. In what follows, this is never forgotten’. (Gunn, 1956, p.9)

In detaching themselves from *history and locality*, today’s architects are also disregarding the significance of memory in the generation of bonds between people and place (Bloomer & Moore, 1997), ‘[rendering the present] emotionally inaccessible, without temporal dimension’ (Van Eyck, 1967, cited in Frampton, 2007, p.298); this widespread failure to acknowledge the role of their buildings as both a ‘part of a general cultural production and a part of history’ (Caruso, 2008, p.12) fosters a built environment devoid of opportunity for ‘sympathetic invitation’ or ‘personal response’ (Sennett,

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<sup>45</sup> Within this section, three of the four tensions identified (those which describe and address the architect’s approach to the design of spatial qualities and characteristics, and which therefore can be directly correlated with the dialogue between Gunn’s reflections and the author’s strategy for the understanding and creation of place) will be highlighted; they are: detachment from history and locality; detachment from materiality and the construction of meaningful form; detachment from the body and the senses. The fourth (detachment from methods of representation and communication, which is primarily concerned with the depiction and dissemination of the architectural design output) will be discussed at a later point in this chapter.

2006, p.109) through which people can build an identification with and attachment to place.

The author's review of relevant environmental psychology literature reveals substantial evidence that a sense of history and historical connection can often play a key role in the development of an attachment bond between person and place (Stedman, 2003; Lewicka, 2005; Low, 1992). Embodying tradition and evoking a message of continuity and connection, historical environments have been found to often be favoured over contemporary architecture (Devine-Wright & Lyons, 1997; Hay, 1998; Hayden, 1997; Nasar, 1998), with the degree of attachment felt appearing proportionate to the degree of interest exhibited in the history of the place in question (Lewicka, 2005).

As Canter (1996, p.117) reminds us, place is essentially 'a quality of a location', and is determined by 'the system of experience that incorporates the personal, social, and culturally significant aspects of situated activities'; the identity and character of a place are directly informed by its unique historical context, and by the variety of people (and, consequently, their religious or ethnic groups, etc.) who have lived there over time - it cannot be defined solely by one group of inhabitants (Lewicka, 2008). A person's role within their own social network - be it ethnic, national or familial - has been recognized to have an influence on a significant majority of their personal recollections, regardless of whether or not the event or occasion in question occurred within the person's lifetime. 'Human memories are basically social [and therefore collective] memories', write Paez, Besabe and Gonzalez (1997, cited in Lewicka, 2008, p.212; see also Connerton, 1989; Devine-Wright & Lyons, 1997; Fentress & Wickham, 1992); typically existing as collective memories of past events (and therefore belonging not to individuals but to groups or communities), what is remembered 'depends not on personal experience but on oral traditions, cultural transmissions or [...] detective work in discovering the past' (Lewicka, 2008, p.212).



Through employing ‘the backward cast’ to uncover clues on how to proceed ‘in the hunt’ (1956, p.9), Gunn encourages his reader not to attempt to replicate a particular experience or scenario, but instead to glean from it as much as possible about its significant traits or characteristics, so that such new-found knowledge can be used to inform the next step forwards. Similarly, the author’s strategy for architectural practice encourages the architect to reflect on the unique context and history of the place in question, to aid in the creation of environments that invite attachment through communicating a notion of time and encouraging the imagination. Acting as a conduit between the subjectivity of place and the objectivity of contemporary architectural practice, the architect should strive to identify and employ both significant and relevant collective memories and conceptions of place as a vehicle to mediate between the two, enabling ‘an [accurate] understanding of place as the context of human actions and events’ (Entrikin, 1991, p.26). In addition (and as will be discussed further in due course), they should consider and truly value their own personal experience and history of place attachment (regardless of apparent relevance or irrelevance to the project in question), in order that it may in future act as a tool in understanding and relating to both place and conceptions of place (Franck and Lepori, 2007).

#### **6.2.2.2        ‘By the way’ (Gunn, 1956, pp.9-11)**

‘The second reflection, born from experience, is that in this hunt [...] the spoor is picked up by chance, often when least expected, and the quarry is come upon not by design so much as by the way; [...] the circumstances, the unknown, cannot be compelled into a pattern beforehand [...]’. (Gunn, 1956, p.9)

‘What happens by the way is not a matter of philosophy but of life, of [...] experience. One can of course attempt to analyse it, to fit it into this system of thought or that, but by its very nature it is bound to cause a diversion in the neatly fitted jigsaw [...]’. (p.11)

As has been noted in the third chapter of this thesis, there are numerous pieces of literature which, in failing to recognise and acknowledge that each design problem has its own unique context and set of circumstances, falsely

promote the architectural design process to be largely predictable and sequential; in reality, this creative process has no predictable beginning, end, or sequence of occurrence, and (due to the many variables involved) could comprise endless possible paths and solutions, which makes attempting the mapping of a generalized and sequential route both irresponsible and impossible (Lawson, 2005, p.48).

Similarly, there have been numerous failed attempts within the field of environmental psychology to define ‘golden rules’ and “magical” formulae’ (Canter, 1977, p.81) for use in the prediction of an individual's’ psychological response to the physical aspects of their environment. Eschewing this notion, Canter’s model for place (and, by extension, the author’s strategy for architectural practice) (Figures 3.1 and 3.2) affords the opportunity for significant physical aspects of place to be uncovered ‘by the way’ (Gunn, 1956, p.9); the designer cannot generalize or be selective about which elements to study - instead, the most significant aspects of each unique setting are revealed to the through a generalizable process of investigation which explores the three key constituents of place as defined by Canter (1977, pp. 158-160) - activities, conceptions, and physical attributes. Encouraged ‘to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation which he [or she] finds uncertain or unique’ (Schön, 1983, p.68), the complexity of the architect’s design process is such that there is a strong chance for their moves to have unintended outcomes, both fortunate and unfortunate; in response, they should

‘take account of the unintended changes he [or she] has made in the situation by forming new appreciations and understandings and by making new moves. He [or she] shapes the situation, in accordance with his [or her] initial appreciation of it, the situation “talks back,” and he [or she] responds to the situations back-talk. In a good process of design, this conversation with the situation is reflective.’ (Schön, 1983, p.79)

The reflective architect<sup>46</sup> is not reliant upon the application of universal

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<sup>46</sup> Following the example of the methodology employed within body of research, the author’s strategy for place encourages the architect to become a reflexive practitioner (as defined by Schön, 1983; see also section 3.4.1 of this thesis), occupying the role of both designer and

theories or techniques within the process of design; each design problem (and the activities, conceptions, and physical attributes of its circumstance) is unique, and must be considered as such. The unearthing of the key characteristics of place, the resulting design response and the ‘narrative-like synthesis’ (Entrikin, 1991, p.26) which binds them together should all occur *by the way*, through cyclical, reflective conversations and their revelations (both welcome and unwelcome) which reframe the problem on each occurrence; ‘[t]he unique and uncertain situation comes to be understood through the attempt to change it, and changed through the attempt to understand it’, Schön (1983, p.132) writes. The architect, with as little prejudice as is possible, must remain open to the peculiarities and particularities of the place, its narratives and context, and cannot assume that a standard solution to the design problem in question exists; through gradually discovering and understanding clues to the significant characteristics of both project and place, an appropriate point of departure for a sympathetic and meaningful design intervention will begin to emerge (Schön, 1983, p.129).

‘So in the hunt one has to keep an eye open for the chance clue. Not that the eye will always spot it; or, rather, the eye may see it but will consider it of no value because it is outside the pattern of what is expected. Afterwards, perhaps in the moment of defeat, comes the reflection: If only I had realised’. (Gunn, 1956, p.11)

#### **6.2.2.3      ‘[A]utobiography must provide the atom’ (Gunn, 1956, p.9)**

This thesis has argued that the technological advances of recent decades have distanced the architect from the realities of site and context, encouraging the production of representations (and ultimately buildings) which are disconnected ‘from existential depth and sincerity’ (Pallasmaa, 2005, p.31); this objective stance, with its ever-dominant visual bias, attributes ‘far more importance to form, idea and appearance than the ways of living, to

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evaluator in a continually evolving and responsive dialogue with a design project and all aspects of its context.

occupants' needs, and embodied experience' (Franck & Lepori, 2007, p.21). All too often, contemporary architectural practice, with its apparent lack of material and existential sensibilities (Caruso, 2008), overlooks the emotive and sensory potential contained within our everyday environment. Our preference for new, machine-made materials and their message of 'ageless perfection' (in contrast to the expressions of history, age and use typically exhibited by natural, more traditional materials such as timber and stone) has rendered much of our architecture emotionally flat and inaccessible (Pallasmaa, 2005, pp.31-32; see also Heidegger, 1971, p.161; Gooding, Putnam & Smith, 1997; Sharr, 2007). We have, in essence, become detached from not only *the body and the senses*<sup>47</sup>, but also from *materiality and the construction of meaningful form*<sup>48</sup>, and frequently appear (in many aspects of architectural design, from the layout and proportioning of space to the specification of materials), to be failing to consider the importance of lived experience. Gunn (1956, p.9) writes:

'if the hunt is to be real it will have to be founded on actual experience. Clearly in the pursuit of the atom of delight autobiography must provide the atom. Any other way of providing it would be an imagined way. That might save the face of the self but the self could never then say: It happened to me'.

Korpela (2012) and Downing (1992a, 1992b, 1992c) note memories of what Gunn terms 'actual experience' (1956, p.9) to contain great potential for achieving an architectural approach (and outcome) conducive to the creation of meaningful and memorable environments. '[B]uilding blocks for positing the semblance of future places' (Downing, 1992a, p.441), *place images* are memories of a personally significant setting, and are often composed of an understanding of space and a sense of meaning, and demonstrate both place attachment and place identity. Through referencing their personal 'environmental past' (Proshansky, 1983, p.59) in the early stages of design, the architect can develop a design sensibility which relates and responds to the needs of the eventual occupants, increasing awareness and appreciation

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<sup>47</sup> Refer to section 1.5 of this thesis (pp.28-32).

<sup>48</sup> Refer to section 1.4 of this thesis (pp.24-28).

for not only their own significant experiences and memories of place, but also of the impact of their decisions as environmental designers (Bishop and Hull, 1991; Cooper-Marcus, 1990).

As has been previously discussed within this thesis, in commonly devaluing the importance and relevance of personal lived experiences within the process of design, both architectural education and practice continue to encourage the architect to adopt an objective stance, often resulting in architecture which fails to foster a sense of place and attachment (Franck and Lepori, 2007); although this thesis has strongly stressed the necessity for the architect to respond to the conceptions of others rather than to their own (often inaccurate) projections and assumptions (Canter, 1977, p.4), the author's strategy for place also advocates the use of personal place imagery in design, believing it to be critical to establishing an empathetic and fruitful dialogue between the architect and not only whoever they may be designing for, but also place. Whilst the architect should treat each design project as being unique and new, he or she should not discount previous relevant experiences; instead, whilst '[attending] to the peculiarities of the situation at hand' (Schön, 1983, p.129) (and, most importantly, to the conceptions and responses of others), he or she should employ these place images in developing an understanding of what is both possible and desired in that instance, and to use his or her repertoire to 'compose new variations' (p.140).

'[N]o reflections will be considered of value unless they stem from experience. Always, first: it happened'. (Gunn, 1956, p.11)

### **6.2.3 Observations on Narratives of Place**

Offering further support to the fundamental argument of this thesis, the eminent architect, author and educator Nigel Coates observes that in our 'messy, complicated, [and] multi-layered' contemporary culture, 'most architecture [...] deliberately avoids emotional engagement with its user' (2012, p.11). Narrative, with its origins in the late Latin terms *narrativus* and

*narrare* (Pearsall, 1998, p.1231), can be defined as ‘an account or story, as of events, experiences, etc.’ (McLeod, 1984, p.749); as a design philosophy, Coates suggests, it ‘provides a way of coming face to face with architecture in the ‘dark and unfrequented wood’ of the anything-goes culture of our times’ (Coates, 2012, pp.9-10). Prioritizing human experiences of meaning in architecture (and the necessity to form them into stories) over an emphasis on cutting-edge technology and style, ‘narrative in architecture can fulfil not only a psychological need [such as that for a sense of place, belonging and identity] but a functional need as well’ (p.11).

This thesis has already highlighted several key sources of narrative (such as the *conceptions* of the eventual user and the *personal place imagery* of the architect) as being inherently capable of acting as aids in the ‘narrative-like synthesis’ (Entrikin, 1991, p.92) of place and architectural practice. This section will briefly consider two other sources (literature and light) which, through the context-specific creative explorations of this research, have revealed themselves to be highly influential in terms of the author’s own sense of place and attachment. Salient points relating to our sense of *detachment from methods of representation and communication*<sup>49</sup> will also be briefly discussed in relation to the author’s creative studies of light and shadow, highlighting how the narrative encouraged by haptic and creative processes could offer a degree of recovery from the widespread sense of placelessness felt throughout the Western world.

#### **6.2.3.1 Literature**

The fourth chapter of this research employed the work of Neil M. Gunn as a vehicle to explore and better understand Kaplan’s Attention Restoration Theory (1995); two of Gunn’s most prominent works (*The Silver Darlings* (1999) and *The Atom of Delight* (1956)) helped to place complex scientific

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<sup>49</sup> Refer to section 1.6 for a more detailed account of this fourth and final tension identified by the author to be rooted in our architectural approach to place.

theory within a relatable context whilst also outlining various principles for 'the hunt' (1956, p.9) that are relatable to the author's strategy for the understanding and creation of place. Discussing this quest for a heightened sense of self and identity, Gunn (1956, p.11) observes that 'literature not only covers] the territory but on occasion flush[es] the quarry itself', offering 'an early glimpse' of the elusive atom as it does so. Whilst there are many different types of novel, those based upon 'account[s] of the real thing by the person who has done it' contain inherently richer and more powerful clues than those that are purely fictitious. Elaborating, Gunn (1965, pp.15-16) continues:

'The kind that sets out to give a picture of human beings in their social and economic setting may, if it is sufficiently large and complicated, be so "like the thing" that it attains the verisimilitude of "a slice of life". The details are accurate, the way the factory, the department, the farm, the prison, the ship, the military headquarters is run is flawless'. (1956, pp.15-16)

As has been previously noted, *The Silver Darlings* (Gunn, 1999), widely acknowledged to paint a vivid, accurate and meaningful picture of the essence and environmental context of Highland life (Basu, 2005; BBC, 2004), could easily be considered one such novel. Through her reading and analysis of this text, the author was afforded valuable insight into the historical and cultural events that helped to shape not only Gunn's sense of place, but that of the present-day community on the east coast of Caithness; critically, Gunn's rich descriptions of his surroundings and of the relationship between people, land and sea provided the author with the new and unexpected experience of appreciating and relating to the environment through the eyes of someone else, encouraging a re-evaluation of her approach to place.

It is of course unreasonable to assume or suggest that all design projects would possess within their contexts such a wealth of highly regarded and fact-based literature waiting to be explored, or that its impact upon the architect would always be so profound and powerful; in addition, the author acknowledges that such literature is not the only source of existing narrative

that is worthy of exploration - there are many others, such as song, film, oral history and museum artefacts, for example. Regardless of the source or its perceived significance, what can be gleaned and interpreted from the author's experience is that the architect should be willing not only to look for and immerse themselves in existing contextual and factual narrative wherever and whenever possible, but, during their explorations, to be open and responsive to the insight into place and experience that it offers.

This narrative will, by its very nature, be second-hand to the architect, and although greatly important, should never be relied upon as a substitute for first hand experience of place, but merely as a guide to the essence of its nature; 'let it be clear that clues and glimpses from such quarters [where the story is retold by someone else] will be accepted only as aids in the hunt', Gunn (1956, p.11) reminds us.

#### **6.2.3.2      *Light***

'And we have stories of our own; the curious citizen can easily discover architectural narrative everywhere. Narratives arise spontaneously in the course of navigating the world - from inside to outside [and] private to public, personal experience to collective myth'. (Coates, 2012, p.13)

As documented in the fifth chapter of this thesis, the author first discovered and began to explore the concept of architectural narrative through a series of creative studies into the relationship between light and shadow within historic and derelict buildings lying along the Caithness coast - explorations which would later emerge to be critical both in the development of her strategy for architectural practice and in the transformation of her relationship with place.

Illustrating the influence of light upon our sense of place within the Western world, Charles Moore (in the foreword to *In Praise of Shadows* (Tanizaki, 2001, p.1)) observes:



‘One of the most basic human requirements is the need to dwell, and one of the central human acts is the act of inhabiting, of connecting ourselves, however temporarily, with a place on the planet which belongs to us and to which we belong. This is not, especially in the tumultuous present, an easy act (as is attested by the uninhabited and uninhabitable no-places in cities everywhere), and it requires help: we need allies in inhabitation. [I]n the West our most powerful ally is light’.

Conversely, the most powerful ally in the East is not the presence of light, but instead its absence - shadow (p.2). Discussing these differing approaches and tastes, Tanizaki suggests that whilst those in the Orient take satisfaction from the natural qualities of their surroundings, ‘the progressive Westerner is determined always to better his lot’ (pp.47-48), continually seeking ‘brighter light [...] to eradicate even the minutest shadow’. More often than not resulting in ‘the anonymous atmosphere of the homogeneous electrical glare’ (Franck and Lepori, 2007, p.96) and the paralysis of our imagination (Pallasmaa, 2005, p.46), such excessive overuse of electrical lighting fails in the creation of alluring and meaningful environments, ‘[wiping] away [any] sense of place’ or intimacy (p.50) as a consequence. In the West, we all too often fail to understand or appreciate the mystery of shadows (Tanizaki, 2001, p.29), overlooking their power to ‘invite unconscious peripheral vision and tactile fantasy’ through ‘[dimming] the sharpness of vision [and making] depth and distance ambiguous’ (Pallasmaa, 2012, p.50).

By coincidence, and perhaps as an unconscious response to the sense of detachment from place that much contemporary Western architecture (and the lighting conditions it contains) appears to actively encourage, the author’s explorations of place, light and narrative quickly began to mirror these Eastern sensibilities. Having been mystified by the supposed ‘immense power’ and ‘magical’ qualities of the light in Caithness (Klein, D., 2006a, p.21), and with an approach which had previously been solely driven by practicalities, the author’s understanding of and appreciation for the emotive, sensory and narrative potential of light (and subsequently place) was altered by her reading and, to a more significant degree, by her creative response to her surroundings.

It is safe to say that the quantity and quality of relevant documented

narrative (such as literature) will no doubt vary in accordance with the unique nature and context of each design project, and in some instances may not even exist. In contrast, whilst also undoubtedly variable in both quality and quantity, light (and, in its absence, shadow) can be viewed as a considerably more reliable and easily accessible source of place-specific narrative, and should be acknowledged and explored as such; as an aid in stimulating the imagination and senses through the animation of space (Franck and Lepori, 2007), it is often greatly overlooked, to the detriment of our architectural environment and, subsequently, our sense of attachment to place.

#### **6.2.3.2.1      *The Haptic Response***

As this thesis has highlighted, the architect's immersion in haptic acts such as drawing and model making often fosters not only creative thoughts and concepts (Sennett, 2008), but also a sense of affinity with the subject matter (Turkle, 1995); in reimagining and responding to qualities, associations or experience through drawing or model making, the architect not only creates 'pictures of possibility' (Sennett, 2008, p.40), but engages in the narrative of place in the process (Pallasmaa, 2005, 2009). It is at this conceptual stage, 'when the architectural essence of the building is conceived and determined', that the intuition and creative response of the architect is critical, but yet is most often overlooked, stifled by an over-reliance on new technologies and computer drawing (Pallasmaa, 2009, p.95); reflecting our visual bias, this *detachment from methods of representation and communication* commonly results in a failure to engage with the realities of site, context and experience, with the resulting images and architecture seeming to suggest that human life is unimportant (Pallasmaa, 2009; Sontag, 1986). '[P]rojecting their ideas upon the world, rather than discovering what is already there or could emerge' (Franck and Lepori, 2007, p.21), the output of many architects is not grounded in an experiential reality.

Allowing herself to respond instinctively to first-hand experience of her environment, the author's creative practice, heavily influenced by a curiosity regarding the history and past inhabitants of various buildings, has explored the dialogue between light and shadow, solid and void, form and proportion, the body and space, and materiality and sensory experience; as the fifth chapter has documented, the reflexive and haptic processes involved have been pivotal in generating not only ideas for new work, but also a completely unanticipated renewal of the author's attachment and approach to place.

This experience of the power and potential sources of architectural narrative further illustrates that in order to create an architecture which is meaningful and emotionally engaging, the architect should look to prioritize human experience through engaging *themselves* with the narratives of the context and the user(s) in question (Coates, 2012, p.11) - a task for which the haptic approach appears highly suitable. What is imperative is not the subject matter, method or degree of skill involved, but the acknowledgement and communication of first-hand experience through such haptic acts; as an approach that by its very nature encourages clarity of thought and a genuine sense of knowing and relating to space or context (Turkle, 1995), it contains inherent potential to aid a recovery from the sense of detachment from place perpetuated by so much of our contemporary architectural practice and design in the West.

*This penultimate chapter set out to reflect upon the most salient aspects of the theoretical and methodological guidance uncovered throughout the course of this thesis, highlighting the interpretation and application of the author's findings in response to the place-specific aspects of her research.*

*Following a brief overview of Canter's place theory (1977), the three components of his model for place (activities, physical attributes and conceptions) were individually highlighted and discussed in relation to their presence and absence within the context of North Lands Creative Glass,*

*Lybster. Canter's guidance related to the uncovering of each component was both considered and expanded upon where possible, exploring the identification of key place-defining features and characteristics. Using pieces from the North Lands' permanent collection as examples of conceptions of place, the author proceeded to draw parallels between the identified conceptions and the traits of restorative environments (compatibility, being away, fascination and extent (Kaplan, 1995)), adding further support to the proposed link between these theories.*

*Having previously used 'The Silver Darlings' as a familiar and relevant context for the analysis of Attention Restoration Theory, the author returned to Gunn's texts, exploring his metaphorical reflections (relating to the hunt for the atom) as alternative design principles capable of aiding a recovery from the tensions identified at the outset of this thesis. These principles encourage the architect to reflect on the history and culture of the location in question, to adopt an open and reflexive approach to exploring site and context as part of the design process, and to value and utilize both their own first-hand experience and that of others.*

*Concluding this overview of context-specific explorations and observations, the author then briefly considered the role of narrative in informing a sense of place, referring to her own experience of literature, light and the creative process as examples, before contemplating the potential role of the haptic approach in addressing our disconnection from place.*

*Following a discussion of current place-related architecture policy initiatives and guidance, the final chapter of this thesis will focus on the elucidation of the generalized propositions that compose the author's strategy for architectural practice.*

## **7     Proposing a Strategy**

*Marking the transition from the exploration of context-specific examples to the distillation of a generalized strategy, this chapter will open with a review and critique of place-related architectural policy and guidelines currently being championed within the United Kingdom, suggesting how the profession could benefit from an alternative approach to the creation of place.*

*The author will then proceed to outline her replicable and non-prescriptive strategy for place, illustrating how the salient theoretical and methodological pointers recapitulated in the previous chapter could be articulated as a series of propositions capable of challenging the typical approach and processes of architectural practice. Beginning with the model for place offered by Canter (1977), the strategy will summarize and expand upon the suggested procedures relating to each of the three constituents of place (activities, physical attributes and conceptions); following this, the key traits typical to restorative environments (being away, fascination, extent and compatibility - as defined by Kaplan (1995) in his Attention Restoration Theory) will also be outlined as aids in the understanding and creation of place, with the proposed link between these two theories reiterated. Drawing on insight gained through her creative practice and context-specific explorations, the author will then summarize six generalized suggestions that are potentially capable of aiding the synthesis of place and architectural practice through addressing the tensions identified at the outset of this body of work.*

*The thesis will then close with a critical reflection on the limitations and contributions of this research, highlighting its relevance and potential value to the discipline whilst also suggesting ways in which it could be successfully applied and developed in the future.*

## 7.1 Current Guidelines and Policy Initiatives

Since the inception of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)<sup>50</sup> in 1999, the United Kingdom has seen a steady increase in the number of architecture and planning policy initiatives and related activity within its constituent countries. Having previously published *A Policy on Architecture for Scotland* (The Scottish Government, 2001), the Scottish Executive established Architecture and Design Scotland (A+DS)<sup>51</sup> in 2005, with the Welsh Assembly Government having launched the Design Commission for Wales (DCfW)<sup>52</sup> in the interim (in 2002). Then, in 2006, the government of Northern Ireland released *Architecture and the Built Environment for Northern Ireland (A+BE)*. Responding to the Localism Bill that had been passed earlier that same year, in 2011 the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) wrote their two-part *Guide to Localism*; more recently, in 2013, *Creating Places*, an architecture and place policy statement, was published by the Scottish Executive, with the *Farrell Review*<sup>53</sup> released in 2014, as this body of research was drawing to a close.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Communities and Local Government, the role of CABE, alongside championing good design, was to advise the government on the topics of architecture and urban design in England, and to influence decision-making through working directly with all involved, from clients to planners and architects (Government for Northern Ireland, 2006, p.5). CABE was to later merge with the Design Council in 2011.

<sup>51</sup> 'Scotland's champion for excellence in architecture, placemaking and planning', A+DS '[inspire] the public to get involved with architecture' and 'offer informed advice to those responsible for the development of our places'. (Architecture and Design Scotland, 2014)

<sup>52</sup> Mirroring the mission statement of A+DS, the Design Commission for Wales 'champion[s] good design for the built environment', proclaiming their vision to be 'for a Wales that is a better place'.

<sup>53</sup> '[A] broad and independent review of our collective efforts to plan and design our future built environment', the Farrell Review represents 'a snapshot in time' (The Farrell Review, 2014, p.2); it was commissioned by Ed Vaizey MP, the UK Government Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries, and undertaken by Sir Terry Farrell, 'a significant [British] urbanist' and architect (Finch, 2013).

<sup>54</sup> Whilst these policy initiatives and reviews all 'look wider than the matter of individual building design' (Finch, 2013) (such as that explored by the author), in outlining place-related attitudes and guidance that are being promoted and implemented throughout the United Kingdom (the context most relevant to the author), these documents represent an example of the official guidance currently offered to architects to aid them in the creation of place.

Of these documents, four (*A+BE*, the *Guide to Localism, Creating Places*, and *The Farrell Review*) are current, and therefore of the most relevance to the discussion on our present-day approach to place. One of many similarities they share is a concern for the legacy being left for future generations, with all four acknowledging our built environment to be ‘critical to our happiness and wellbeing’ (The Farrell Review, 2014, p.32), whilst also noting the potential for our everyday places to ‘[enrich] the experience of living’ (Government of Northern Ireland, 2006, p.6) through being ‘uplifting’ and ‘life-enhancing’ (p.4). They also agree that place, with its potential to ‘give us a sense of belonging, a sense of identity, a sense of community, and offer us the amenities to meet our daily needs’ (The Scottish Government, 2013, p.14), should be championed and ‘put [...] higher on the public agenda’ (The Farrell Review, 2014, p.48), rather than being ‘considered merely a backdrop to our lives’ (The Scottish Government, 2013, p.5). To achieve this, a ‘bottom-up approach’ (whereby the ‘shaping’ of place involves community engagement as part of the design process) is advocated (The Farrell Review, 2014, p.48; Government of Northern Ireland, 2006; The Scottish Government, 2001), with emphasis on ‘[reaping] the benefits of good design’, which, as Ed Vaizy MP observes, helps ‘[build] communities, [create] quality of life, and [make] places better for people to live, work and play in’ (The Farrell Review, 2014, p.3).

On a basic level, the underlying ambition of these documents echo that of this body of work, and reflect a desire to improve our contemporary architectural condition and aid the successful creation of place within the Western world. Despite this, the author finds these architectural guides and policy initiatives to commonly exhibit (and unconsciously promote) fundamentally detached attitudes towards place and its creation.

Within these texts, there is much discussion regarding the commitment of these various governing bodies to ‘good design’ (Government of Northern Ireland, 2006, p.4), but little consensus on how a high standard of design could be defined or achieved; Sir Terry Farrell, recognizing this to be a

common failure across the architectural and planning professions, proffers the definition given by Claire Devine, Director of Architecture & the Built Environment at the Design Council. Devine declares ‘design quality [to be concerned with] road layouts that prioritise pedestrians; public spaces that are safe and attractive; buildings that are an appropriate scale and density to support local services and business’ (The Farrell Review, 2014, p.71). Notably absent is the consideration of a sense of place or attachment as a marker of architectural design quality. Whilst the traits she highlights should not be dismissed as undesirable or unimportant, Devine’s definition appears to communicate to the profession that an individual’s emotional connection to (or meaningful experience within) their physical environment is not considered to be an indicator of design quality.

Similarly, there appears to be little or no agreement amongst these documents regarding the definition of place, or how it could be encouraged within our built environment. The Scottish Executive (somewhat reassuringly) states it ‘to comprise [of]: the environment in which we live; the people that inhabit these spaces; and the quality of life that comes from the interaction of people and their surroundings’ (The Scottish Government, 2013, p.11); by contrast, *The Farrell Review* reduces it to an methodological acronym (Planning, Landscape, Architecture, Conservation and Engineering (2014, p.157) that appears largely devoid of sympathy for the everyday human experience and need for a sense of belonging; *A+BE* (Government of Northern Ireland, 2006) frequently refers to the importance of a sense of place, but does not define it.

Discussing the value of effective participation in the creation of place, the Scottish Executive’s policy observes that regardless of their scale or location, communities possess ‘unique and valuable knowledge about the neighbourhoods and places in which they live’ - knowledge which must be put to use from the very beginning of the design process (The Scottish Government, 2013, p.15). However, as the RIBA admits in its *Guide to Localism*, despite the intentions of many architects,



‘the experience of communities is still too often that of being ‘told’ what [...] they are going to get, [with] consultation events [being] centred on ‘presenting’ proposals and designs drawn up in isolation from any real chance or opportunity for local people to say what matters to them about their local area’. (RIBA, 2011, p.8)

The Farrell Review suggests several ways in which this gap could begin to be bridged, such as providing architects with professional incentives to act as architectural tour guides, to deliver presentations in schools, and to lead conversations with adults; this, it is suggested, ‘would have the additional benefit of encouraging them to use less “architect-speak”’, helping counter the widespread impression of architecture being ‘an elitist profession’ (2104, p.48)

The author finds it arguable that such methods of engagement, imposed or steered by the objective architect and their often incorrect assumptions about the needs and conceptions of the general public, could be truly considered as a ‘from the bottom-up’ (p.48) approach; not only do architects use different language to talk about place and design, but - as has been discussed throughout the course of this research - their perception of and approach to both tend to be fundamentally very different from that of the general public, to the detriment of our built environment and our resulting sense of place and attachment (Canter, 1977). Throughout these various policy documents and guidelines there is a strong suggestion that it is the planning professionals who require the biggest re-education in terms of the creation of place; there is no recognition of the disparity in approach to and understanding of place that exists between architects and those they are designing for, despite the acknowledgement of the existence of “architect-speak” (The Farrell Review, 2014, p.48) and its impact.

The RIBA (echoing the previously discussed observations of Canter which are also central to the author’s strategy for architectural practice) observes that

‘the quality [and success] of the places created [by the architect] will be dependent on [their] ability to appropriately engage with local people and local issues, right from the beginning, designing ‘with’ rather than ‘for’ communities’. (2011, p.2)

Believing architects to already be sufficiently equipped with the necessary skills and expertise needed ‘to help local communities create great places’ (2011, p.19), all four of these current documents overlook that, at present, a great number are failing not only to ‘appropriately engage’ with the eventual users of their buildings, but also in the successful understanding and creation of a sense of place (Frampton, 1974, p.433).

It should be noted that whilst, as stated, this thesis does not dispute the fundamental ambition of these four current documents, they are indicative of the common failure to acknowledge these widespread shortcomings of contemporary architectural practice; surely before place (on any scale) can be created with any true success, it must first be genuinely understood, and our detached approach to it acknowledged and amended. The aim of the author’s developing strategy for place is to facilitate such a recovery.

Whereas the emphasis in all four of these documents falls on the potential of the architect in ‘helping communities to [envision and] maximise the potential of their places’ (RIBA, 2011, p.2), the author’s strategy simultaneously adopts a reverse approach, prioritizing the employment of the communities conceptions of place in order to help *architects* understand and maximise the potential of the place in question. Promoting emotional connection, meaningful experience and the presence of a sense of attachment as indicators of design quality, her strategy considers place to be ‘a system of experience’ (Canter, 1996, p.117) which is uncovered, understood and accepted through genuine and honest engagement with users from the earliest stages of each design project. Critically, this strategy (which will be summarized subsequently) outlines a series of much-needed propositions for architectural practice, offering architects a potentially powerful tool to aid them in fulfilling their ‘professional responsibility to design places that deliver better lives for people’ (RIBA, 2013, p.19).

## 7.2 Propositions for a Recovery

Delivering an overview of the author's non-context-specific strategy for place (Figure 3.2), this section will first summarize the methodological guidance derived from her explorations of the place-related theories of Canter (1977) and Kaplan (1995), before outlining a series of short propositions (informed by the outcomes of her context-specific explorations) relevant to our approach to place within architectural practice and design as a whole.

'If the design team is to do its job effectively (with or without the help of social scientists) it is necessary for it to elaborate the nature of the places which it is attempting to produce', Canter (1977, p.193) writes. As this thesis has discussed, his tripartite model (which forms a critical starting point and component of the author's developing strategy for architectural practice) hypothesizes that a sense of place is the result of the correlation and dialogue between activities, physical attributes and conceptions (1977, p.158), which can be explored in any order; Canter's guidance for the identification and description of these constituents of place will now be summarized, taking into account (where applicable) the reflections drawn from the author's earlier explorations in relation to an architectural brief.

- The *activities* component of Canter's model is concerned with 'what happens where' (1977, p.160); this information relating to behaviour and actions can be gathered in a number of ways, such as through gathering verbal statements (relating to the use of rooms, etc.) from those who will be occupying the resulting architecture (Tagg, 1974), or through employing the behavioural mapping techniques developed by Ittleson et al. (1970, cited in Canter, 1977, p.161), for example.

It should be noted that the exploration of relevant activities cannot take place effectively without the architect having clearly identified and understood the key programmatic and/or accommodation requirements of the project; '[w]hether these [...] are symbolized by

the names of departments, [activities] or events, the important task is to resolve the potential ambiguities and produce a list which deals with places in a way which fits the conceptual system of the users', Canter states (1977, p.163).

- Dealing directly with the tangible qualities and characteristics of a setting (p.159), the *physical attributes* and *conceptions* components of the model are closely intertwined; to identify the physical variables that help define a place, Canter suggests that the architect or design team should first establish any commonalities present within relevant conceptions, before following this with a search for physical attributes which are interrelated with these groupings.

In order that a clearer, broader understanding of (and stronger connection to) place could be achieved, the author proposes two strands of exploration in relation to both the physical attributes and conceptions of a setting, the first relating to the existing environmental and physical context, and the second to the yet-to-be created (or altered) architectural form. Suggesting sketching to be a suitable procedure for the identification and description of key physical aspects, Canter (1977, p.160) notes that '[b]y asking people to draw as best they can from memory, their own representations of the city, building or room, it is possible to identify some of the major components of places of interest'; influenced by Canter's observations and the context-based portion of this research, the author advances that such a procedure should be employed (within the same group of relevant people) to explore both experiences of the existing and surrounding context, and thoughts relating to ideal places which do not yet exist, the latter of which has been recognised to contain inherent potential as an aid in the preliminary stages of design (p.160).

- As with the physical attributes component of Canter's model, in order to fully uncover and understand people's impressions and *conceptions* of their physical environment (whether existing or hypothetical), it is critical to 'the effectiveness of the eventual environmental modification' that the most appropriate 'conceptual system', is identified and employed; the architect must ensure that these conceptions of place emerge unguided, and in a manner that is most suited to the respondents (1977, p.125).

Canter cites verbal descriptions, either open-ended or constrained, as an often overlooked example capable of providing a 'richness of information' (1977, p.161) regarding the characteristics and qualities of place; other suitable methods could include written descriptions, sculpting or sketching (as described previously in relation to the physical attributes of place), for example. Regardless of the conceptual system chosen, however, '[these] accounts [must be obtained] as carefully as possible and corroborate[d] by whatever means available' (p.48).

Whilst diversity in people's conceptions of place is inevitable, and should be accepted and embraced as such, it is the commonalities in response (such as recurring themes, words or subject matter) within the user group(s) in question that hold the key to the overall identity of place, and that the architect or design team should seek to identify and respond to.

Although the architect may begin their study of place by exploring any of these three components, Canter observes that the place cannot be 'fully identified' (1977, p.158) until the activities, conceptions and physical attributes of a setting have all been determined; during (or after) this

process, the architect can begin to seek out links between the constituents of place. As an example<sup>55</sup>, Canter suggests:

‘[D]uring the design stage [...] we may begin by identifying the groupings of activities to be housed in the proposed design. Once identified we may move on to the conceptions of the links these activities have to given physical forms, for example, that small group discussions should take place in a quiet, private area separated from other activities. Out of this may grow proposals for specific physical structures which may then be checked against the activities they will house’. (1977, p.159)

The purpose of Canter’s model is to aid the identification of key place-defining elements that could then be referenced or employed in the creation of an architectural design; his suggestion of how the constituents of place could then be linked and developed into an architectural form marks the limits of his expertise as an environmental psychologist and of the author’s strategy for place, leaving the outcome open-ended and ready for development and exploration at the hands of the practicing architect.

Supporting Canter’s efforts to encourage a true understanding of place and how it may be created, the author proposes that once they have been identified through the gathering and exploration of conceptions of place, the prominent features of a setting could also be considered in relation to the four environmental characteristics identified in Kaplan’s Attention Restoration Theory (1995); this could allow the architect the opportunity to begin to consider the potential role and manifestation of these attributes in the creation of a restorative environment (and therefore, potentially, a sense of attachment to place) during the linking of the constituents of place in architectural design. In summary, these four traits are:

- *being away*, where the environment offers the the experience of being ‘physically or mentally removed from the [everyday] activities that are attentionally demanding’; offering ‘a conceptual rather than a physical

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<sup>55</sup> Within Canter’s example, the ‘physical forms’ he speaks of correspond with the second of the two strands of investigation previously proposed by the author, relating to the yet-to-be-altered (or created) architectural form. In addition to the consideration of a sense of place *internal* to an architectural setting, care should also be taken to establish a meaningful connection to the surrounding *external* context, such as through the referencing of key features identified via the first of these previously discussed strands.

transformation' (Kaplan, 1995, p.173), it is often observed to occur through the experience of nature and natural environments or conditions.

- *fascination*, whereby the surroundings are of sufficient intrinsic interest to be a catalyst for involuntary attention. A sense of fascination is most commonly acknowledged to occur in response to process (such as the observation of an unfamiliar (and often natural) phenomena), or content (following the experience or exploration of intriguing physical features or historic elements found within an environment, for instance).
- *compatibility*, where the environment presents itself as being inherently capable of assisting 'the pursuit of inclinations [and] not just of purposes' (Oulette et al., 2005, p.176), appropriately meeting the needs of people whilst supporting 'intrinsically enjoyable' activities (Kaplan, 1983, p.327); requiring a lesser degree of effort to function in, natural settings (or environments with strong natural connections) are perceived to most consistently rich in this quality.
- *extent*, which encourages the feeling or experience of being in or near 'a whole other world' (Kaplan, 1995, p.174) through simultaneously maintaining engagement with an individuals mind whilst encouraging exploration (mental or physical). This can be evoked through creating the illusion of miniaturization, or from the referencing or presence of historic features, for example.

In the opening chapter of this research the author identified our widespread sense of disconnection from place to be rooted in four tensions attributable to the legacy of modernism; evident throughout much contemporary architectural practice and design in the Western world, these tensions reflect the detachment of the architect (and, as a consequence, of those who inhabit or use their buildings) from: history and locality; materiality and the

construction of meaningful form; the body and the senses; and methods of representation and communication.

Offering a potential recovery from this condition, the author's strategy for place urges the architect to adopt an interstitial stance between the objectivity of architectural practice and the subjectivity of place; acting as a conduit for the synthesis of the two, the task of the architect is to uncover and explore relevant sources of narrative in order to aid 'an understanding of place as the context of human actions and events' (Entrikin, 1991, p.26).

By reflecting on the insight gained through her context-specific explorations and creative practice, the author has been able to identify six generalized suggestions for an alternative approach to architectural practice and design; the aim of these propositions is to aid not only the synthesis of place and architectural practice, but also a recovery from the four previously identified tensions, encouraging the successful creation of architecture conducive to a sense of place and attachment as a consequence.

In order to overcome their objectivity and achieve success in their understanding and creation of place, the author suggests that the architect (or design team) should strive to:

- reflect back on the unique historical and cultural context of each project, drawing on sources such as historical accounts, collective memories, 'oral traditions [and] cultural transmissions' (Lewicka, 2008, p.212) in the hunt for clues relating to key historical events and their impact on the identity and character of a place and its people.
- approach each design project as a chance encounter with a unique context and set of circumstances, accepting (as a reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983)) that the creation of place should not be viewed or approached as predictable; the point of departure for a meaningful, responsive architectural design should result from the gradual



discovery and understanding of the key characteristics of both place and project ( p.129).

- draw on and be receptive to relevant lived and sensory experience (both that of themselves and of relevant others) of place and context, in order to foster a genuine empathy with the occupants of the resulting building(s), and to value and better understand the impact and power of their decisions as environmental designers.
- explore and utilize the power of context-specific, fact-based narrative, both pre-existing (such as that found in literature, for example) and personal (perhaps generated through a creative response), as a tool to aid emotional engagement with architecture (Coates, 2012, p.11).
- to adopt a more haptic approach to architectural practice in general, but particularly in the early stages of design, when the influence of ‘pictures of possibility’ (Sennett, 2008, p.40) on the clarity and development of thought is most needed and most valuable (Schön, 1983). Grounded in experiential reality, making and drawing by hand encourages a conversation and sense of affinity with the subject matter (Turkle, 1995); by contrast, in addition to stifling the creative and emotive response of the architect, an over-reliance on computer drawing and related technologies can result in a failure to successfully engage with the realities of experience and context (Pallasmaa, 2005; 2009).
- approach participation not as a threat, but as a transformative opportunity, making it their priority to identify and engage with the users. As Blundell Jones, Petrescu and Till (2005, p.30) remind us, the process of participation, ‘as a signal of the reality to come, confronts architects with issues they may otherwise have preferred to either hide from, or else delay dealing with, [...] by bringing forward and prioritising the needs of [others]’; although often negatively perceived

as ‘a threat to normative architectural values’, it should be viewed as a valuable ‘opportunity to reconsider what is often taken for granted in architectural practice’.

### **7.3     *Critical Reflection***

Marking the end of this thesis, this section will reflect on the limitations of this research, moving on to discuss its achievements and contributions in relation to its aims and objectives, before closing with suggestions for its future development and application.

#### **7.3.1     *Limitations and Contributions***

As a student and RIBA Part II qualified architect, the author admittedly has relatively little experience of working in architectural practice, and for this reason was initially hesitant to comment on its shortcomings and make suggestions for its improvement. However, the impact of our globalized and capitalist culture is both increasingly evident and undeniable, as is the human need for (and sensitivity towards) a sense of place; recognizing that many architects are failing in the successful understanding and creation of meaningful and memorable environments (and the urgency with which this issue needs to be addressed), the author’s proposed strategy for architectural practice represents a possible starting point for a much-needed recovery from our contemporary condition. Challenging the top-down attitude exhibited by many within the profession, it advocates a place-based approach to design which reflexively responds to the uncovering and exploration of the users’ conceptions, instead of to the often detached and enforced assumptions of the architect. Through raising awareness of how the sense of detachment from place within the Western world is being perpetuated (and how it may be countered), this thesis contains the potential to provoke architects and related design professionals into evaluating and perhaps

rethinking aspects of their own architectural practice and approach.

Whilst the propositions composing this strategy have yet to be fully articulated or tested as methods, they have emerged as the result of a comprehensive theoretical study, partly reflecting on factors perceived by the author to have heavily influenced the transformation of her own approach to place during the context-specific component of this research; distilled into generalized observations and suggestions for architectural practice, these propositions form a replicable but non-prescriptive strategy intended for application, testing and development by others during the earliest stages of design. Although initially presented with a live brief, it was beyond the scope of this research to propose a hypothetical design in response; furthermore, it would have been something of a fruitless exercise, given that the success of both the strategy and project could only be truly judged following construction and occupancy.

Central to this body of work has been the ambition to explore and further a strategy through which prominent theories related to the creation of a sense of place and attachment could be translated from within the field of environmental psychology for use in the process of architectural design. The employment of complex and discipline-specific terminology within environmental psychology, coupled with the lack of agreement on the definition of and relationships between place-related constructs, has proved to be a significant challenge, presenting considerable opportunity for misinterpretation of theory and findings, particularly by those such as the author, who (although having read and researched extensively within this field in an attempt to limit such errors) has no training or formal education in environmental psychology. However, following an extensive and careful review of related literature, the theories of Canter (1977) and Kaplan (1995) were selected for further exploration due to their relevance and promise with regard to the author's line of enquiry; both are place-related, and focus on the direct study of the relationships between people and their everyday physical environments - an unusual approach in the often laboratory-based discipline

of environmental psychology. Following an analysis of their hypotheses, the author identified a promising further link between the two, uniting them in a non-context specific strategy for the understanding and creation of place, the application of which was then explored in relation to the author's response to an existing, context-specific architectural design brief. Offering reciprocal support to both theories whilst also broadening their scope, this thesis has potentially opened up a valuable new line of cross-disciplinary enquiry, encouraging and highlighting the inherent benefits of close collaboration and knowledge transfer between the fields of environmental psychology and architectural design.

Encouraging the inclusion of prominent place-related theories and the haptic processes of making within architectural practice, the strategy outlined in this body of work encourages the architect to form genuine connections with people and place, based on experience and understanding rather than assumption and projection. Despite her work often employing methods and materials not widely available within architectural practice (and not always developing in response to a brief), the haptic nature of the author's creative process has highlighted and challenged our often technology-driven approach to architectural design, indicating how an urgent re-evaluation is both needed and achievable.

### **7.3.2 *Proposals for Future Work***

The author recommends that one of the next steps for this body of research should be the exploration and analysis of the aforementioned strategy in the development and construction of an architectural design project, followed by a period of collaborative, multidisciplinary critique (which would include a post-occupancy analysis). In *The Psychology of Place*, Canter (1977), following an outline of his model for places, proceeds to briefly discuss the process of design evaluation and its importance, proposing an apparently little-tested conceptual system for evaluation (pp. 163-167). '[P]erhaps the

most telling feature of the evaluation model', he writes, 'is the possibilities it produces for involving the conceptualisations of the design team in the process of evaluation'; allowing a comparison between the conceptions of the designer and the users, this model suggests a method through which discrepancies or similarities between the two could be identified and, most critically, learned from. The author suggests that it is deserving of further exploration.

As the third chapter notes, despite the growing theoretical debate regarding 'design conjectures' and the importance of 'place imagery' (Downing, 1992a, p.442), there remains a significant lack of in-depth investigation into this matter within both psychology and architectural design education; it is in the latter, as Bishop and Hull (1991), Canter (1977) and Downing (1992a, 1992c, 1992c) have noted, that the egocentric and objective design habits present throughout much contemporary architectural practice are learned. To this end, the author strongly advocates a return to an architectural design education that is based upon the realities of context and the needs of people, where the experience and place imagery of the student, rather than being dismissed, is validated and drawn upon in sympathy for (and identification with) the people they design for.

Rather than delivering closure and a completed strategy, this body of work represents the beginning of several important lines of enquiry, each containing a great deal of potential for postdoctoral and practice-based research into the successful creation of place. Throughout, the author's primary aims have been to begin to bridge the gap between architectural design and environmental psychology, and to suggest useful, non-prescriptive and replicable pointers for future architectural practice and design; if this thesis makes even a small contribution in either area, it will have served its purpose. If it informs or provokes debate about our often detached approach to place and its creation, so much the better.

This body of research has led the author in many unexpected directions. Following her relocation to Lybster, she was invited to develop design proposals for the development of both North Lands Creative Glass and Harbour House, both of which she is undertaking in partnership with Mike Roper, a sole practitioner based in East Linton in East Lothian. Having secured funding and acquired additional land for the project, North Lands' revised brief is for an accommodation block to the rear of the School House, and an extension (housing a 'clean' workshop) to the front of the Alistair Pilkington Studio. Louise Tait's intentions for Harbour House have remained the same since the first *In Place* residency in 2010 - in the short term, the house will be renovated for holiday leasing, with an adjacent artist's studio following at a later date. Both are due to start on site in the coming months, with (at the time of submission) the North Lands' project currently out to tender, and Harbour House awaiting consent from Building Standards. In addition, Tait has commissioned the author to develop and create a large-scale glass piece (based upon the *Harbour House* series' of works in glass and stone) for installation within the completed building.

The author is currently represented by Bullseye Gallery (in Portland, Oregon), and is in talks with the Research and Development Department of the Bullseye Glass Company to produce a series of large cast glass works based upon *Flagstone Works*, *Castletown: Maquette 3* and *Cooperage, Lybster: Maquette 1*. She has also been invited to participate in a residency at Pilchuck Glass School (in Stanwood, Washington) in September 2013, where she will look to begin broadening her body of place-specific work.

## Appendix 1      Finn and the Butterfly (Gunn, 1956, pp.86-100)

'The first day he had seen the two white butterflies flitting about the cabbages, little Finn had started with great astonishment, but after a time had summoned courage to approach them, whereupon they had risen high over his head and got tossed away on the air like flakes of snow. This had excited him keenly, and when he asked his mother in the evening, as she tucked him into bed, what they were, she said they were called "grey fools".

"But they're not grey, Mama."

"What colour, then?"

"White."

"That's right. You're Mama's clever boy, aren't you? And when you grow up to be a big man . . ."

But he was not interested in her words and words tonight. "Where do they come from, Mama?"

"Oh, well, you see, they come from- from many places."

"Do they? What places?"

"Many and many a place."

"Do they come from Helmsdale?"

"Yes."

"And do they come from Canada?"

"Well, I don't know if they come from Canada. They would have to cross the sea."

"What's the sea, Mama? Is it a big, big place full of water?"

"Yes."

"How big is it?"

"It's very, very big. It's bigger than all the moor at the back, away, away to Morven, and farther than that."

"Is it? It must be awful big."

"Yes. Now, come, say your prayer and go to sleep, for if little boys don't sleep they won't grow into big men, and what –"

"Mama? Couldn't the grey fools cross above the sea in the air?"

"They might. But it would be such a long, long, way that they would grow tired and then what would happen to them?"

"What?"

"What do you think?"

"Would they fall into the sea and drown?"

"Yes. Just as little boys will be drowned if they fall into the river. And that's why I have told you never to –"

"Did you ever know anyone who was drowned, Mama? Did you, Mama?"

"Yes."

"Who?"

"Now go to your sleep. I can't stay here with you all night. Come. *To-night as I lay down–*"

"Mama, tell me, where do the grey fools go when they fly away from the garden?"

But altogether his mother had been very unsatisfactory, and her final admission that it was God who made grey fools was nothing new, for God made everything. You can always tell when an old person is going to say it is God.

But the butterflies excited him a way nothing had ever excited him before. They appeared suddenly out of nowhere, like magic, and were white, white. They would

wait on a cabbage leaf until you almost had them and then – they were off, not like a bird, but drifting up and down in the strangest way.

Until one day he so nearly caught one that he left after it in the air and fell. This time the butterfly merely flitted to another young cabbage, and being angry against it for making him fall, he stalked it with a stone in his hand.

But once again the butterfly eluded him, and he threw the stone at it. The butterfly drifted over the low wall, and he ran after it and saw it meet another butterfly. Together they danced in the air, until one slanted away and alighted on a green lead. Finn was so eager now that, once over the wall, he rushed up to the butterfly as if he might be swift enough to stamp on it with his foot. The butterfly arose and, drifting on in its careless, aggravating way, drew Finn after it. When it had passed from view over a bank, he ran his hardest to surprise it on the other side.

And he so very nearly did that both his excitement and his anger increased.

It was at that moment that death entered into his heart. He would kill the butterfly.

His hair was dark and his eyes brown – if not so brown as his mother's, and on his child's skin – he was four and a half years of age – there was a faint flush of blood and guilt. So he had to keep going after the butterfly and away from home.

He went on and on, round little bushes and under big boulders, and sometimes the grassy bank was so steep that he slid on his bottom and then his kilt came away up and he was bare from the waist down. His kilt was crotal-brown, for his mother had made it out of her old skirt, and his jersey, which Granny Kirsty had knitted, was brown, too. His feet and his legs were a delicate tan, and his head was bare. He had lost the butterfly altogether and here he was at the stream clawing his thigh where a flat prickly plant had stung him. He would have waited to attack the plant for stinging him if it hadn't been for the butterfly and the guilt in his mind. He looked back up the slope to make sure his mother wasn't after him. She would be very angry. She said last time that she wouldn't spank him that time, but she would next time. This was next time.

The butterfly wouldn't wait when he cried "Wait" to it, and then it had made him fall, though he had meant no harm to it, and then it had run away. His expression became all the more sober for a queer self-conscious smile in it, and, standing still, picking at a bush, he looked up the brae again. When the wordless inner argument was concluded, he felt anger against his mother as well as against the butterfly. Whereupon he moved along the bank looking, with moody right, into the little pools. He saw a brown trout. He saw two, he saw three, and as he couldn't count beyond three the next number he saw was eighteen. One big fellow went under a flat stone quite close to the edge on the other side, and where he went in the water was dirtied with brown stuff that rose up in a tiny cloud, so that you knew exactly where he was.

It was a difficult business, crossing the burn, because of the jumps between the boulders, but by wading through the stream where it ran out of the pool, and hanging on to a boulder at the same time, he needn't jump at all and the only real difficulty was keeping his feet on the slimy stones, they were so slippery. The water didn't come right up his legs and he could lift his kilt with one hand. In the middle, however, when he let the boulder go behind him, he found he could neither go forward nor back, and stood swaying and slightly stooped. The small round stones under his feet wanted to slip away. If he moved, he would fall. The only thing left in the world to do was to cry for his mother, to cry loud, loud. But even while he was beginning to cry he took the step forward, the water came to his knees, he let go his kilt, and with a mighty effort lunged for the next boulder a mighty foot away. His courage was rewarded and, hardly having cried to his mother at all, he drew himself



out of that desperate spot, with its treacherous footing, and very soon was wading across the last shallow, with such carefree ease that he slipped and fell as neat as a penny on his bottom.

At this, having run the gamut of emotions in so short a time, he had full right to weep bitterly and angrily, but the flop had been so sudden and complete that its astonishment also made him want to laugh, and by the time he climbed on to the bank and found that no irreparable damage had been done, the uncertain sounds faded out altogether and he glanced around not displeased to find that his misadventure had passed unobserved.

Now for that trout!

He discovered, however, when he carefully surveyed the position, several natural obstacles of considerable, if not unsurmountable, difficulty. From the other side, the water above the stone had looked little more than up to the ankle, whereas now it was up to the knee, The ground sloped down into the centre of the pool, and though it was a little pool it was as deep as a bowl. Accordingly, if he slipped, he would surely be drowned. So he proceeded into the water with the utmost care, leaning sideways toward the bank as he tested each foothold. His kilt, which was sopping wet, became a great embarrassment, because he wanted to keep it from getting wet again. Holding the front part of it high up, he lowered himself slowly into a sitting-down posture. He began to wobble, and thus compelled to let the front of his kilt join the rest of it in the water, he was at once denied all further view of the stone.

On the bank he stood squeezing the water from his kilt but looking at the stone. To tell the truth, he was also just a little afraid of the trout, for it was a monster of four inches and darted with a yellow gleam like lightning. Roddie had told him that a trout did not bite anything except worms, but that an eel would bite your finger as fast as look at you. Besides, to get his hand right down to the stone, he would wet all his jersey, and it was perhaps a little wet as it was.

He would like to do something to that trout for wetting all his kilt on him. He would like to hit it a good hard wallop whatever. Casting around him (with a first glance in the direction of home), he saw a bunch of hazel trees growing nearby, with the young shoots, twice as long as himself, coming straight up out of the ground. If he got a stick and gave it one sharp prog under the stone! What a fright the trout would get, and maybe it would kill him! And then he would fetch the trout and take it home to his mother . . . He glanced up, not too sure that his mother would forgive him even then, though he was taking food to the house.

As he rounded the hazel trees a butterfly rose from his feet. He knew at once it was the same butterfly, by the way it flew, side to side and up and down, laughing at him. It was like a fool, the way it went. It settled; and slowly, without looking at it (except out of the very corner of his eye), he moved towards it, but not directly. He got within a few feet, but then could not restrain himself from rushing. The butterfly rose and danced on through the air, down the burnside.

He followed it at once, without thought, because he had had by the pool a moment of queer dread that his mother's head and shoulders would rise large and menacing over the edge of the brae. If he went farther on then he would be hidden from that near horizon.

The burn wound its way down between the steep braes, and sometimes he had to climb and sometimes to slide, but soon he came to a part he had never seen before, and the he knew he was safe from his mother's eye.

The uneasy, half-smiling expression on his face, he stopped to pick a grass and to chew it, looking cautiously around him at the same time. He had lost the butterfly

and was not thinking about it. He was thinking of his mother and what she might do to him. She had no right to do that to him. She had not.

He began to go on, away from home, away, away from that place where his mother was, in a strange mood that was near to tears and yet far away from them.

But the world itself was strange, too. There were grey rocks and great, green ferns, and in time he came to another little burn, and these two joined into one. He crossed it at a very shallow place because beyond it was the biggest wood he had ever seen, on a steep hillside, and no one would ever find him in that wood, though he himself could lie and watch and see who was coming. Perhaps his mother would come and she would be crying, thinking he was drowned.

The thought of her crying made him feel sorry for her, but it also did him a lot of good. He would be greatly missed.

At this moment his eye landed on a tiny blue object poised on a primrose leaf. He was bending down to touch it when it took to the air. It was a small blue butterfly, the bonniest thing he had ever seen, and his eyes grew round in brightness and wonder. He ran after it in a rapture, but when he got up from his second fall it had vanished. Where did you go? Where? Where? He followed into the wood.

Though the trees and bushes were not high, still they seemed high to him, and being in full foliage, he found that they shut out a view of the ground down by the stream. It was a bit frightening in the wood, too, because the trees were still and had queer twisted shapes often. When he listened and tried to see past the trees, he could hear little birds singing, and once a rabbit gave him a fright.

He could hardly have climbed up through the wood were it not for a narrow, slanting path used by sheep and cattle. This invited him on, and every step he took made it more and more difficult for him to go back; and though the going on terrified him under his heart, yet it also gave him the feeling of one fated to go away. Not that he was going away, away, yet, but – but near it; so near that anyone else would think he was.

Every few yards he stopped and nibbled and gazed about him, and occasionally his expression grew so self-conscious that someone might have been watching him; and once his face for a moment grew shyly merry in the most engaging way. Then he came back to thought of the blue butterfly, and craned round trunks, and stared at unusual shapes for a long time. Sometimes when he stared like that his round, shining-clear eyes would lift to a disturbed leaf without movement of his head, and when he went on a few paces he would slowly turn his head and look back as if he weren't looking at the thing he had been staring at.

There was something in this wood a little bit like what there was in the butterfly, only it was very much stronger than he was, just as he was stronger than the butterfly. Now and then the wood was like a thing whose heart had stopped, watching.

This faint panic might in an instant turn into wild fear; but the instant never came, not quite. And the chequered sunlight was everywhere, full of an aromatic warmth, through which the notes of the little birds fell unafraid.

All the same, when at last he saw he was getting near the top, he went on without stopping once, and would have been very tired had he not emerged and gazed down and around upon the whole world.

He saw more houses than ever he had seen before, and one house – one house – seemed familiar and yet strangely small, and he could never have been certain it was his own house if he hadn't seen black Jean and red Bel, the two milch cows, tethered beyond the house in the rough grass towards the burn. They were small also. Like a

discoverer, he was proud and excited, and then had a great longing for the home he could see.

But no one was about the house, neither his mother nor Granny Kirsty, and it looked indeed a dead and deserted house. It terrified him the way it lay. His breast became a conflict of many emotions.

But whatever it was deep down that had possession of him now, he turned and walked away. And he went a little blindly, in great sadness, in pity for himself, and with a terrible longing for his mother that yet had in it something alien and withdrawn.

At that moment he saw the white butterfly, the lovely thing that had lured him from his home.

Like the gay fool it was, it flitted and poised, with the airiest inconsequence, until it settled on a green leaf and flattened its wings. When little Finn sat down, the up-curved edge of the leaf hid the butterfly from his view. On hands and knees he went slowly towards the leaf through the coarse old grass. He did not raise his head or rush the last yard. He had had his lesson more than once. From the grass he slowly lifted his right hand to the near edge of the leaf and then pounced, bringing the leaf and himself headlong into the grass, but with a wild fluttering under his palm, a mad flickering and tickling. He did not let go. He crushed, he crushed, and felt the butterfly break. Instantly he drew back his hand. His palm was covered with silvery dust. On the broken leaf the butterfly lay dead.

He wiped his palm against his breast and looked around. Guilt was glittering in his eyes and congested in his face. He got up and went away, slowly at first, but then with steps that broke into a run. When he fell he gave a squawk, got up at once, and with a backward glance ran on. When he was out of sight of the spot he stopped. He had killed the butterfly. A smile struggled to come to his face; his eyes kept glancing brilliantly. He performed small acts of bravado, stamping down a bracken, kicking the grass. His mind was a mounting tumult. He trod on his familiar prickly leaf and the tumult broke. Curled up in the grass, he wept and sobbed wildly, drenchingly, until he was completely exhausted.

No-one came to him. He was all alone in the world. As he went slowly on, he saw a house up the slope to the left. He bore away, and when the collie dog barked from the gable-end he crouched under an overhanging bank peering round now and then at the dog. A woman came out and asked the collie what it was barking at, as if she were expecting someone. "You old fool," she said to the collie, and went away. The dog sniffed the corner of the low wall in front of the house, scraped the ground, and growled; then turned after the woman.

Some time after that he found himself on a small green field, with a hill in front and immense ruined walls running down from it. For the first time his loneliness came upon him in a great fear. He was so little that he could not run away and stood exposed in the centre of all the light in the world. As he tried to walk out of that field he felt great weights on his knees, but he got out of it, away from the walls, and round the corner of the hill. Here were high rocks with massive boulders at their feet shutting off the upland on his left hand. In front, a rolling field was cultivated. He thought first of going down one of the rigs, but he held to the base of the hill on his right, for there were no walls on this side, until he saw the river. His tiredness was now so heavy upon him that he began to whimper at sight of the river and could not go any farther. The whimpering filled all his mind so that he had not to think any more of what was going to happen to him. He lay down on his right side, pulled his knees up, and hid his face with his arms and hands, whimpering as into his mother's

bosom in the moment before sleep overtakes. The earth's bosom was warm with the sun and soon little Finn was sound asleep.

The sun woke him in its own time, and after a first bodily stirring his eyes opened and he remained dead still. Then his eyes roamed in slow wonder, widened in fear. For one terrible moment he was lost in the abyss of Nowhere, in a nightmare of sunlight and strange appearances. Vividly intense, it yet passed in an instant, and the world of memory stood in its place.

He got to his feet and saw a man down by the river. For several seconds he could not move because he knew it was Roddie, and Roddie had stopped.

Finn turned to go back along the base of the hill. Roddie called, "Is that you, Finn?"

Finn did not answer, but kept on steadily. "Here, Finn!"

Finn did not turn round, and when he knew that Roddie was coming after him he began to run.

Roddie very soon overtook him, but whenever he caught him Finn began to struggle violently, saying, "Let me go! Let me go!"

"But Finn, Finn, my little hero, where is it you're going?"

"Let me be!" and he twisted so fiercely that Roddie had to let him down lest he rupture himself.

Crouched at Roddie's feet, face to the grass, he refused to answer any questions.

"Well, I don't think that's a nice way to treat a fellow," said Roddie, sitting down beside him. "Anyway, aren't you coming back home?"

"No."

"Oh," said Roddie, "I didn't know you were going away. But you haven't anything with you. You can't go away without taking your packet of bread and milk. A man must do that or he can't go at all. I'm going off to Helmsdale to-morrow morning and I'm going home now for my packet of bread and milk. You wouldn't like to go to Helmsdale, would you? That's a long way off, if you like; over the sea, beyond the mountains, across the Ord. I have been getting my boat ready. You can see the spots of tar on my hands if you look. Look!"

Finn turned his face just far enough to see the splotches of tar on Roddie's fingers and palms. Shortly after that Finn was walking with his hand in Roddie's. Roddie had promised to take him in his boat, saying Finn would be a great help to him, especially if he was a little older.

But when they came to the place where the two burns met and Finn realized he was drawing near home, he hung back upon Roddie's hand, Roddie talked persuasively, but Finn tugged strongly.

"Look!", said Roddie. "Look! There's 'God's fool' watching you."

Finn saw the butterfly and stared. His body went all stiff.

"Did you never see one before?" asked Roddie. "There's often one or two of them about here. If you come with me—"

"No!" screamed Finn. "No!"

Roddie, squatting, put his hands around him, but Finn, losing his head in his violence, beat Roddie in the face, screaming wildly.

"Tut, tut, tut," said Roddie, throwing back his face, "what a fighter you are! Surely you are not frightened of a little thing like God's fool. God's fool would never hurt anyone."

"No," screamed Finn, "not God's fool, it's – it's grey fool." And he stamped the ground and again blindly attacked Roddie.

Roddie wondered for a moment, for though the real name of the butterfly was God's fool (*amadan-De*), and though it was called grey fool (*amadan-leitb*), still the distinction should merely have interested little Finn, and certainly not produced this

frenzy. Then his eyes were arrested, and he said to Finn, "Hsh, here's someone coming."

But the thought of anyone coming only made Finn worse, and he screamed louder than ever, refusing even to look, for an intimacy in the hush of Roddie's voice communicated the fear that the person coming was his mother.

Catrine stopped, her hand to her heart in the characteristic gesture, then she came running. She never looked Roddie, her deep-brown eyes round and wild, her face pale, as if she had been a long time with ghosts. She snatched up little Finn, one arm under his damp kilt and one round his shoulders, pressing him against her breast. He struggled, but his struggles had no meaning, no outlet. "My darling, my own one," she murmured passionately, and put about him in no time such a smothering atmosphere of love and endearment, that his struggles grew tired, and even his weeping fell away into snorts and hiccoughs. But he could hardly afford to give up his tremulous weeping even if he had been able (which indeed he wasn't), because all else was lost to him except the knowledge that his mother should have been angry and spanked him, and instead here she was loving him. But at any moment she might remember and change. To be spanked before Roddie was now a terror beyond all others. This his position was very complicated and pitiful, and its sad desperation broke in his throat.

Roddie looked on with his detached smile, thoughtfully, until Catrine suddenly faced him and asked, "Where did you find him?"

"Oh, we were just down the road a bit," he said, nodding backwards with his head. "Can't Finn and I have a walk together if we like?"

But she was far beyond humour. "Surely," she gasped, "you hadn't him at the shore?" "Not quite, perhaps. But, you see, Finn and I have arranged to sail together, so, you see—" He stopped, before her expression of horror and fear.

"You wouldn't dare!" she gulped, her breathing beginning to come rapidly again.

"Well, all right. I sort of promised, because – well, never mind." He smoothed a splotch of dry tar with the ball of a thumb, regarding it with his head slightly tilted.

"Where was he?"

He met her eyes. "As a matter of fact, I found him taking a rest in the House of Peace."

She stared at him until she saw what he said was true. Then a swift change came over her face, softening it in a wild glancing way, and immediately she turned and walked hurriedly off, though even in that moment he had seen the glint of reaction.

Yet Catrine did not break down, did not even weep, though the tears ran down her face, and when she got into a hidden nook she wiped her eyes with the back of her hand before sitting and taking Finn into her lap. Her shoulder shook two moss-yellow bees out of a purple fox-glove, but she hardly heard them. She gave Finn a little secret hug against her breast, and then, lowering her head, said softly,

"Tell Mama where you went?"

He would not answer, but buried his face where it had been a moment before. However, in a short time she got him to mutter: "I was chasing God's fool."

"What's that? Who said God's fool?"

"Roddie. It's not God's fool, is it? It's grey fool? Isn't it, Mama?" His voice broke, threatening hysteric sobs again.

"Yes, yes. It's grey fool. Roddie had no right to say God's fool. That's an old name – and it's a sin to use God's name. It's grey fool, as Mama told you."

Feeling comforted, he said, "I saw a little one, a little blue one. It was – it was – lovely. Did – did you ever see a blue one?"

"Yes."

“Where?”

“In the Strath of Kildonan.”

“Was that when you were a little girl?”

“Yes.”

“Long ago?”

“Long, long ago.”

His eyes opened thoughtfully, in silence.

“Did you chase the butterfly?” she asked.

He moved with confusion and muttered, “Yes.”

“Was it chasing the butterfly that took you away from home?”

He picked at the bodice of her dress. “Yes.”

“Tell Mama,” she whispered.

He tried to raise his eyes but failed. Then he said. “I killed the butterfly,” and smothered his sobbing mouth against her.

Though Catrine might have killed many butterflies to save him a scratch, she found herself without words. She caressed his back, and stared over his head at the intermingling of terrors and meanings in life, hidden, but there.

Her lips trembled. The meanings had started to take her son away from her. Already the terrible knowledge of good and evil was in him. He had killed the butterfly’.

**Appendix 2      St. Mary's Church Prospectus (Macmillan,  
2009)**

**NORTH LANDS CREATIVE GLASS**

**ST. MARY'S CHURCH, LYBSTER,  
CAITHNESS**

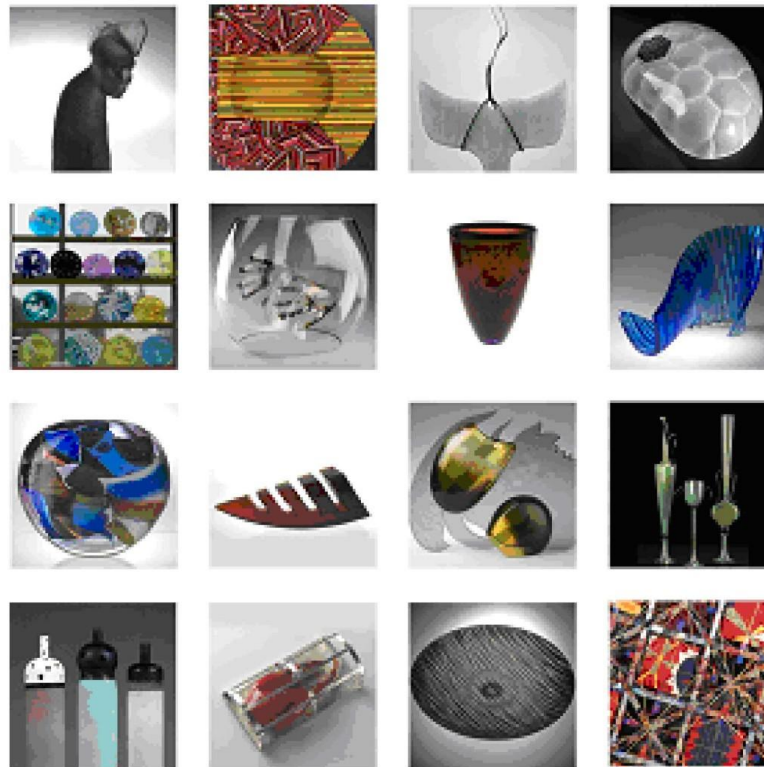
**A PROPOSED NEW FACILITY  
TO DEVELOP APPLICATIONS AND NEW USES OF GLASS IN  
ARCHITECTURE, ART AND DESIGN.**

**TO DISPLAY THE NORTH LANDS GLASS COLLECTION AND  
OTHER CONTEMPORARY GLASS AND TO EXHIBIT AND  
RECORD ONGOING WORKS AND PROJECTS ASSOCIATED  
WITH NORTH LANDS CREATIVE GLASS.**

**TO PROVIDE A COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE TO ENCOURAGE  
ARTISTIC ACTIVITY IN THE AREA**

## **'VISION'**

Over the past eleven years North Lands Creative Glass has built up an international reputation as a centre of excellence for glassmaking. More recently it has become evident that as the organization matures additional space is needed not only to continue to deliver the high level of programming and to expand our vision for the future but also to further evolve our interaction with the local community, to firmly establish North Lands as a destination and consolidate the impact this unique creative enterprise has contributed to the cultural heritage of the Highlands.



*A selection of works from North Lands Creative Glass Collection.*



## ST. MARY'S CHURCH

The proposed renovation of St. Mary's Church, Lybster, will provide new facilities for North Lands Creative Glass and significantly widen the scope of activities presently undertaken.

Saint Mary's Church, built in the 1830's, is a Grade B listed Gothic building of considerable architectural merit with its astragal windows and upper gallery. The building is semi derelict having been unoccupied for over 20 years and needs urgent repair if it is to be saved.

It is situated in the heart of the conservation area in Lybster and its refurbishment would greatly enhance this small fishing community.

Situated across the road just fifty metres away from the Alastair Pilkington Studio, St. Mary's church provides a rare opportunity for North Lands Creative Glass to expand while still keeping all its activities in close proximity and at the centre of village life.

The Prince's Regeneration Trust held a Planning Day in Lybster on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2007 as part of HRH Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay's North Highland Initiative to consider options to find a sustainable new use for the church to which potential stakeholders and those with a particular interest and expertise were invited. The participants unanimously agreed that this was a building worth saving and that North Land's proposals for its use were wholly appropriate.



The proposed renovation to the building will provide:

1. An open area, comprising the rear portion of the church, taking full advantage of the interior height of the building, for creating large-scale architectural and stained glass work.

Two mezzanine galleries at first floor level running along both side walls provide elevated viewing of the space below.

The enormous flexibility created by this arrangement will enable a variety of uses, not only accommodating projects of varying scales, but in addition acting as an exhibition space, enabling 'on site' filming of installations and other works whilst also providing a much needed, 'in house', venue for presentations, seminars and conferences.

2. A ground floor Gallery intended for public access, at the front of the building to display the North Lands Creative Glass collection and other selected works. There will also be audiovisual displays of glassmaking techniques through the use of informational panels, computer, film and video.
3. On the first floor above the gallery there will be a design drawing studio for developing ideas, model making and other group activities requiring a quiet clean working area. This is a much needed and frequently requested facility to complement and support the practical glassmaking workshops at the Alastair Pilkington Studio.

The drawing studio would also be available as a Community Arts workshop during the winter months.

4. A library and archive.  
North Lands growing collection of books, magazines, catalogues photographs, films, video and digital media covering all aspects of glass and glassmaking will be housed on a first floor mezzanine area providing open access for residents and visitors to this important reference and resource material.
5. A small kitchen at first floor level.
6. Toilets on the ground and first floors including provision for the disabled.

The above facilities on both floors will be serviced by a lift in compliance with health and safety guidelines to provide for disabled access throughout the building.

The new facility at North Lands will provide a studio space away from the pressures of academia and industry where artists, designers and architects can collaborate to develop ideas, prototype models and construct full size works for evaluation, documentation or presentation to clients.

The combination of the new facilities at St. Mary's together with the adjacent 'state of the art' workshops for hot and cold working glass at the Alistair Pilkington Studio will provide a comprehensive and uniquely creative environment where concept, fabrication, final construction, display and evaluation can be realised in complete synergy. In this way North Lands would become the creative 'catalyst' providing a much-needed middle step between concept and production, opening the door to a much wider range of projects and opportunities for academic, professional and industrial collaboration than are currently possible.

The open workshops would also be available for longer seminars and the NLCG annual conference.

The building will provide a gallery for the display of selected works from NLCG's collection of contemporary glass. The North Lands Glass Collection has been built up over the twelve years of our existence. At present it consists of approximately one hundred pieces, but grows every year as Masters, residents and some students donate pieces of work to the collection. In 2006, as part of our tenth anniversary celebrations a large part of the collection was exhibited during that summer at the National Museums of Scotland, accompanied by a hard back fully illustrated catalogue. Parts of this exhibition have since traveled to the St. Fergus Gallery in Wick, Iona Gallery in Kingussie and Image Gallery in Inverness. At North Lands there is only room to exhibit a small number of pieces, partly in the Alastair Pilkington Studio and partly at our new premises at Quatre Bras. The collection urgently requires and very much deserves a permanent home.

North Lands now owns the most extensive collection of international glass in Scotland. It is important in itself, a significant resource for glass historians and potentially an attractive tourist destination. The work includes pieces by leading Scottish artists such as Ray Flavell ( currently leader of the glass programme at Edinburgh College of Art and a distinguished artist in his own right) and Alison Kinnaird M.B.E whose work is also featured in the Scottish Parliament Building. Adrian Wisniewski, the distinguished Scottish painter made some pieces whilst teaching a Master Class at North Lands and one of those pieces is in the Collection. The works of many well known British and European artists are also included in the collection, notably a lidded box by Tessa Clegg who won the Jerwood Applied Arts Prize in 2002, a piece by one of Britain's most famous sculptors, David Nash, a sculpture by Sweden's most renowned artist in glass Bertil Vallien and another Swedish piece by

one of the country's most skilled glass blowers, Jan Erik Ritzman, as well as pieces by the French artist Bernard Dejonghe and the German artist Gerhard Ribka. Stellar American artists such as Dante Marioni, Richard Marquis, Joel Philip Myers and Paul Stankard are amongst many other prized possessions.

The collection includes not only the work of established artists, but that of up and coming talent from all over the world, from Australia, New Zealand, Japan, the United States and all of Europe including Great Britain of course. The entire collection is currently conservatively valued at 100,000 pounds

The gallery space at St Mary's will also enable temporary exhibitions of work for sale by artists associated with North Lands. There will also be a small retail outlet in the gallery. It is intended that the changing displays of glassmaking techniques and presentations by leading glass artists of work as yet comparatively unknown to the tourist industry will provide a significant attraction to visitors in this fragile area of the north Highlands.

The first floor design studio will provide welcome additional working space to augment the facilities at the Alastair Pilkington studio, a photographic space and a community arts workshop during the winter season providing facilities for a wide range of art and craft forms for the local population. A number of artists and crafts people have settled in the area who would provide a nucleus for the increased artistic community.

Various parts of the building are expected to be occupied throughout the year.

The total estimated costs for acquisition, refurbishment, fixtures, fittings and equipment would be in the region of £ 740,000.

The estimated start up cost for the first five years is £ 260,000 giving a total project cost of £1,000,000

For detailed Estimated costing see Appendices.

## ANNUAL PROGRAMME

To be integrated closely and expand on NLCG existing programme. Additional activities will be chosen from a list of potential seminars, residencies and projects centred on the areas of art, glass research and applications of glass in architecture and design.

- Residencies for an individual or small team wishing to work on a project which could be of an architectural scale.
- Workshops of one week in duration for an individual or small team providing a unique opportunity to develop new ideas in glass with access to the Alistair Pilkington Studio - A technical assistant would be factored into the budget for this workshop.
- Week long master classes for students or recent graduates from disciplines other than glass, such as jewellery, textiles, ceramics, sculpture, painting, architecture and design in addition to various collaborative projects that might involve elements of theatre, music, poetry or film. This would ideally be International in scope ( UK, Europe, Middle East, USA, Canada, Far East including India, Japan, China, Korea, Australia and New Zealand).
- Four to eight week 'real time' project in association with a Government or Council architectural development or project. (ie Percent for art project).
- Ten week summer exhibitions related to North Lands Creative Glass activities and open to the public. The exhibition at the front of the building would still allow for master class activity to take place in the remaining ground floor area.
- 'Winter months' community projects providing local and regional access to Gallery and first floor facilities

*This schedule allows enough flexibility for courses, residencies, workshops and seminars to be tailored to requirement.*

**POTENTIAL SEMINARS, RESIDENCIES & PROJECTS FOR THE ANNUAL PROGRAMME.**

*( residencies can last anything from four to eight weeks. The length of time for individual projects would be set as required )*

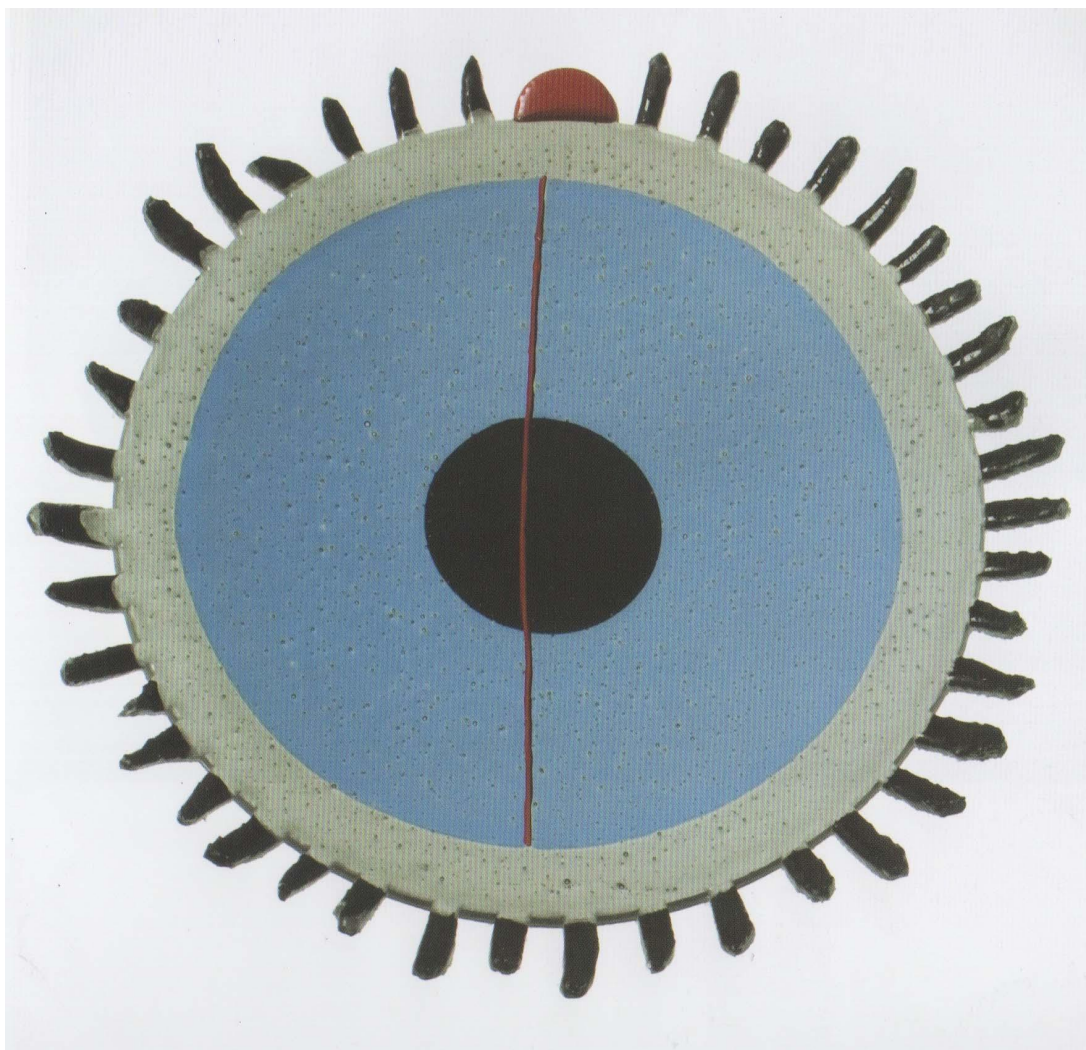
**Seminars, residencies and projects could be focussed on:-**

- New uses of glass
- The possibilities of decorative glass in architecture
- Alternatives to stained glass, (e.g. kiln texturing, bending and forming sheet glass)
- Neon
- Cast glass on an architectural scale
- Use of cold worked sheet glass for architectural and large scale installations
- The possibilities and alternative uses for glass specifically in the local area and Highland Region
- Secular stained glass
- Religious stained glass
- The creation of an installation piece, the making and the piece itself to be recorded for posterity

Residencies could be part of a British or overseas university programme or held in conjunction with an appropriate glass manufacturer (e.g. Bullseye, Derickx, Pilkington, St. Gobin,) or in collaboration with a British or overseas architectural company.

It would also be possible to provide for real time development of an actual ongoing installation project in conjunction with a property development company or individual.

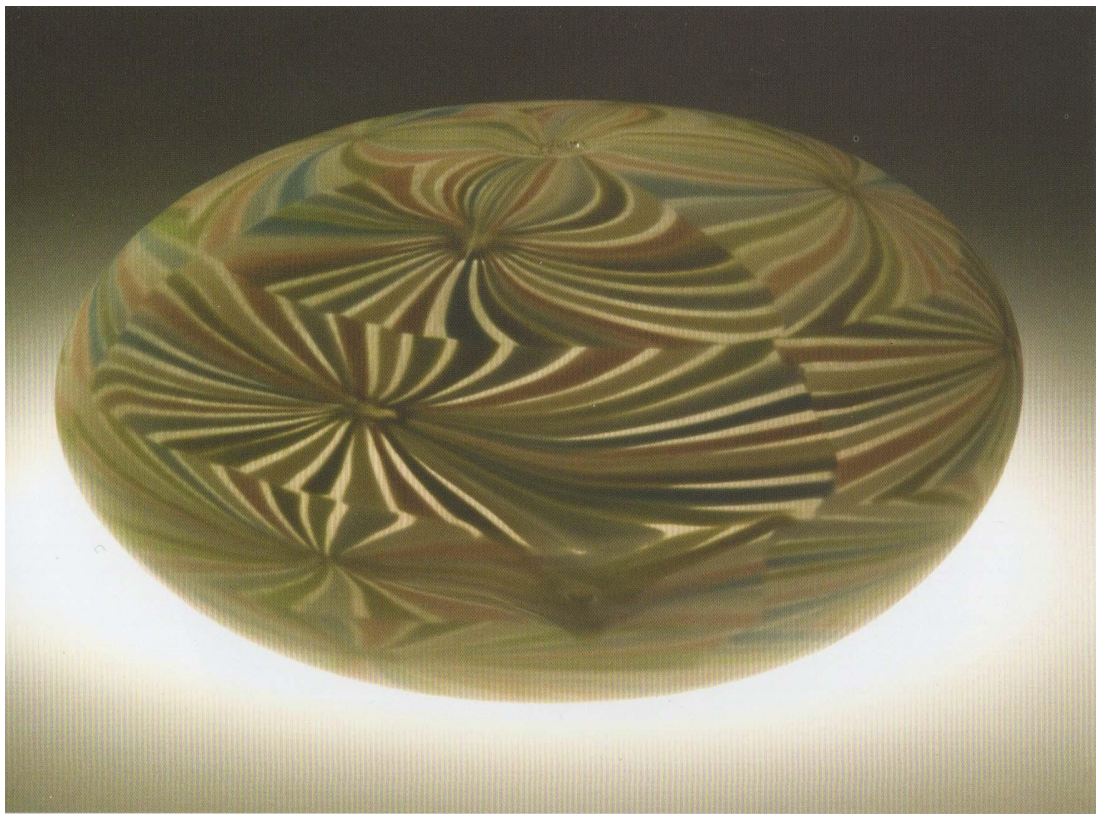




*Ring of Brodgar* (Aldrige, P., 2005)  
42cm diameter

Shallow slumped bowl in red and grey glass with a red strip, the border fringed with forty-one standing stone shapes and a red setting sun inspired by a trip to Orkney, unsigned. (NLCG, 2005, p.15)

Conceptions of place - keywords:  
WEATHER / SUN / LIGHT  
TIME / HISTORY



*Dunnet Head* (Benefield, S., 2004)  
25cm diameter x 12cm high

Blown pebble form with candy stripe murrine patchwork in pinks, greens, blues and whites, unsigned. (NLCG, 2005, p.17)

Conceptions of place - keywords:  
GEOLOGY / COAST / LANDSCAPE / TOPOGRAPHY





*Herringbone* (Coleman, K., 2004)  
6.5cm diameter x 7cm high

Cased grey over clear glass diagonally sliced cylinder form, the engraved herringbone motive seen internally inspired by local fishing lore, unsigned. (NLCC, 2005, p.21)

Conceptions of place - keywords:

ORAL HISTORY / STORYTELLING

HISTORY / INDUSTRY / FISHING / SEA

WILDLIFE/LIVING CREATURES / NATURE



*Untitled* (Dejonghe, B., 2003)  
28cm x 16.5cm x 13.3cm high

Three cast glass forms shaped as Caithness farm houses, one blue, one clear ingrained with sand, one frosted, unsigned (NLCC, 2005, p.23)

Conceptions of place - keywords:  
ARCHITECTURE / ARCHITECTURAL FORM

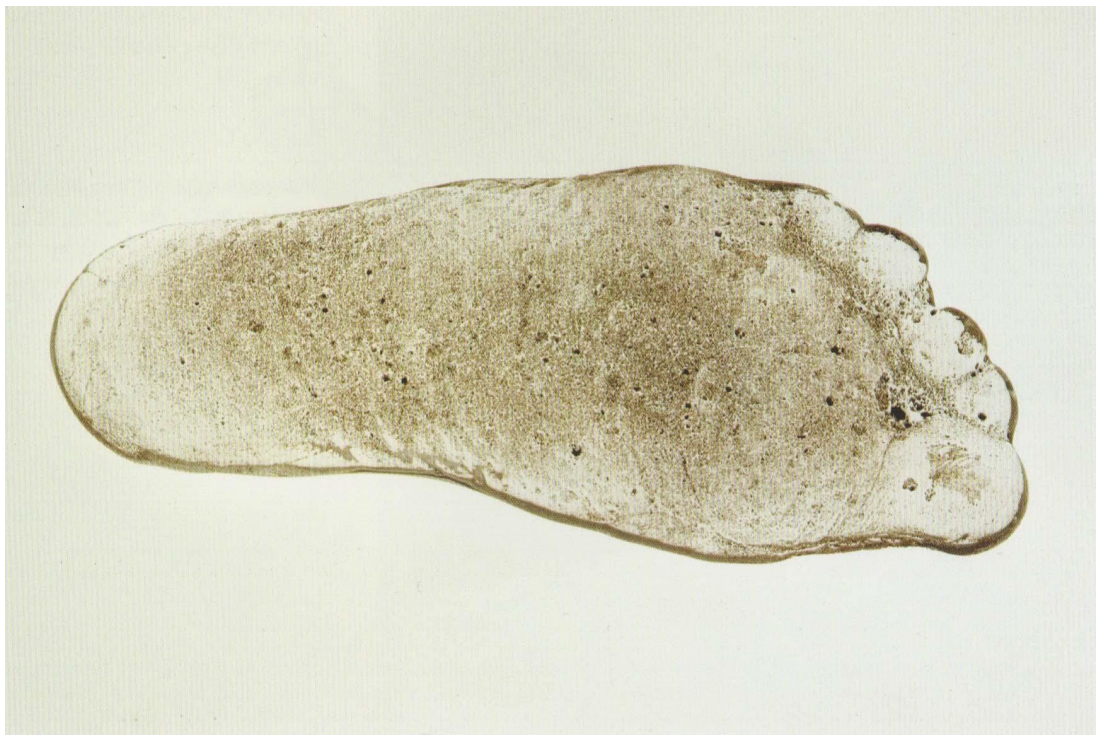




*Landscapes of the Highlands of Scotland* (Gellis, S., 2006)  
Each jar 14cm diameter x 22cm high

'Landscapes of the Highlands' is a section of a larger piece call 'Landscapes'. Sandy asked people to bring sand or soil from around the world and describe the place they took it from, so it is a document of people as well as places. These samples reflect Caithness, in the the north Highlands of Scotland, unsigned. (NLCC, 2005, p.26)

Conceptions of place - keywords:  
LAND / LANDSCAPE / NATURE



*First Footing* (Hiscott, A., 2004)  
24cm x 10cm

Cast Glass form with ingrained sand, shaped as the soul of a right foot, unsigned  
(NLCCG, 2005, p.29)

Conceptions of place - keywords:  
TRADITION / CULTURE





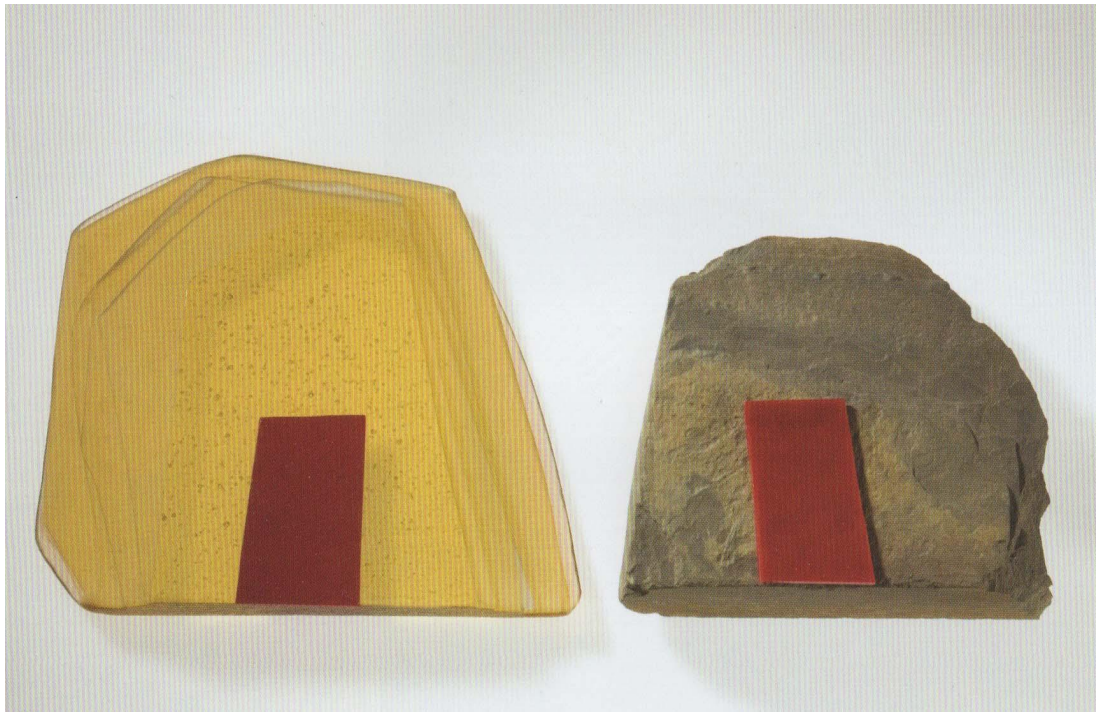
*Whale Tale* (Kienle, G., 2000)  
39cm long

Liquid green cast glass wall hanging, suggesting a whale tail, bound with a white suspension chord tipped with glass, unsigned. (NLCG, 2005, p.34)

Conceptions of place - keywords:

INDUSTRY / FISHING / SEA

WILDLIFE/LIVING CREATURES / NATURE



*Untitled* (Klein, S., 2003)  
Overall size 40cm x 21cm

Composition in stone and glass with two forms suggesting croft houses, one of stone with a red glass 'door', the other in amber and red Bullseye Glass, the glass with diamond point signature North Lands 2003 Steve Klein. (NLGG, 2005, p.35 )

Conceptions of place - keywords:  
ARCHITECTURE / ARCHITECTURAL FORM  
MATERIALITY/STONE/GEOLOGY





*Sky, Sea, Earth* (Lowman, L., 2003)  
19cm wide x 17cm deep x 29cm high

Cast glass composition depicting a fish partially submerged in water, in three parts comprising a frosted glass square base surmounted by a green square above which a frosted glass fish tail; the body of the fish is within the moulded green section, unsigned. (NLCG, 2005, p.38)

Conceptions of place - keywords:

HISTORY / INDUSTRY / FISHING / SEA

WILDLIFE/LIVING CREATURES / NATURE

LAND / LANDSCAPE

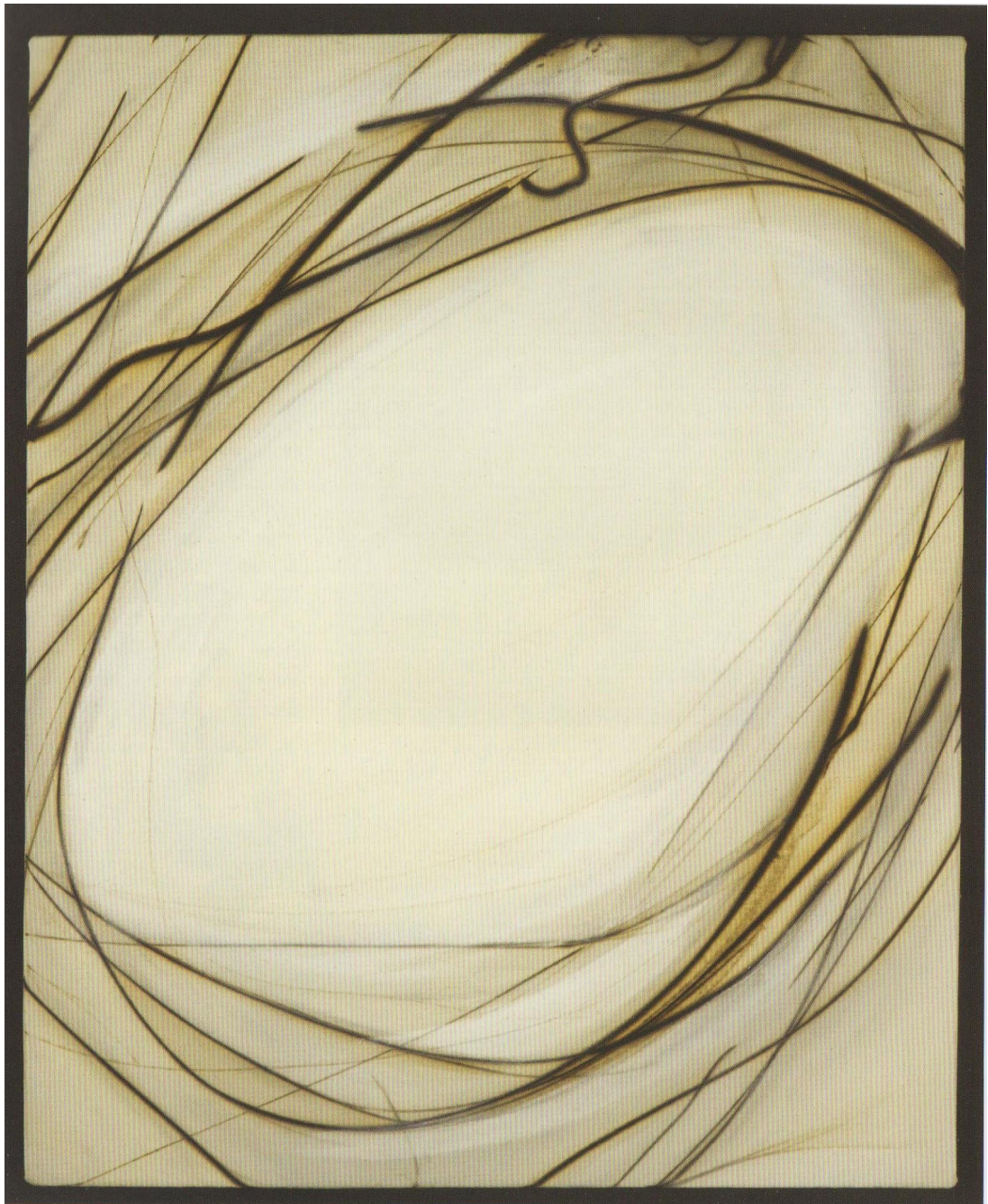


*Fisherman* (Mann, D., n.d.)  
Glass block: 13.7cm x 27.3cm

A cast glass block with intaglio engraved figure of a fisherman, the block with powdered glass colouring on rectangular aluminium base, diamond point signature D. Mann. (NLCG, 2005, p.39)

Conceptions of place – keywords  
HISTORY / INDUSTRY / FISHING / SEA





*Spiral Flightline 1* (McStay, A., 2006)  
80cm wide x 114.4cm high

Acrylic + hot glass traces, unsigned. (NLCG, 2005, p.42)

Conceptions of place - keywords:  
WILDLIFE/LIVING CREATURES/NATURE

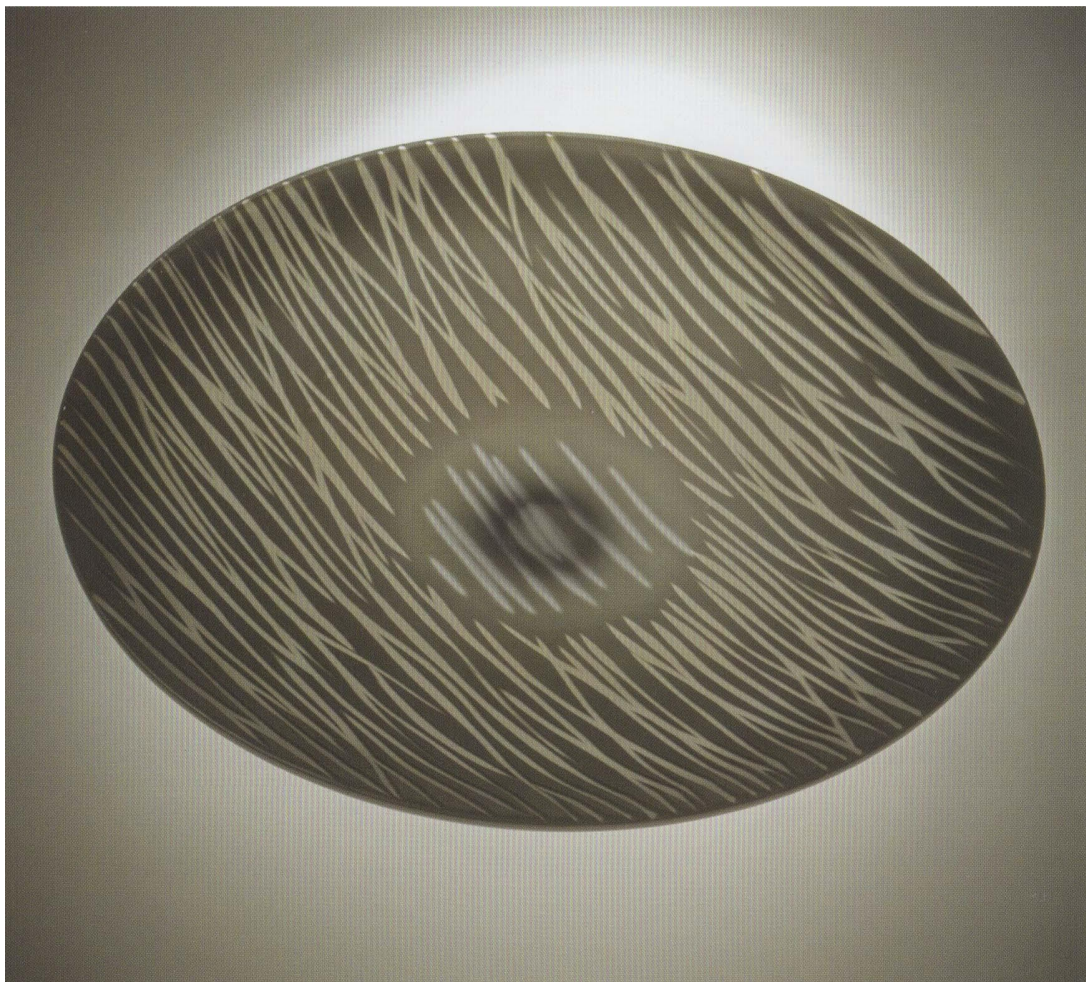


*Lobsterpot Brooch* (Niemann, P., 2000)  
Size of brooch: 13.2cm x 6.8cm x 3.5cm high

Silver and red and clear cased blown glass with green flecks formed as a glass lobster claw held within a silver cage suggesting a lobster pot. With 925 silver mark and artist's monogram stamp PN. (NLCG, 2005, p.46)

Conceptions of place - keywords:  
WILDLIFE/LIVING CREATURES/NATURE  
HISTORY / INDUSTRY / FISHING / SEA





*Sol* (O'Neill, S., 2006)  
16cm diameter

Blown glass, cameo engraved, slumped. *Sol* was inspired by the windblown trees of the Caithness landscape, unsigned. (NLCG, 2005, p.47)

Conceptions of place - keywords:  
NATURE / WEATHER

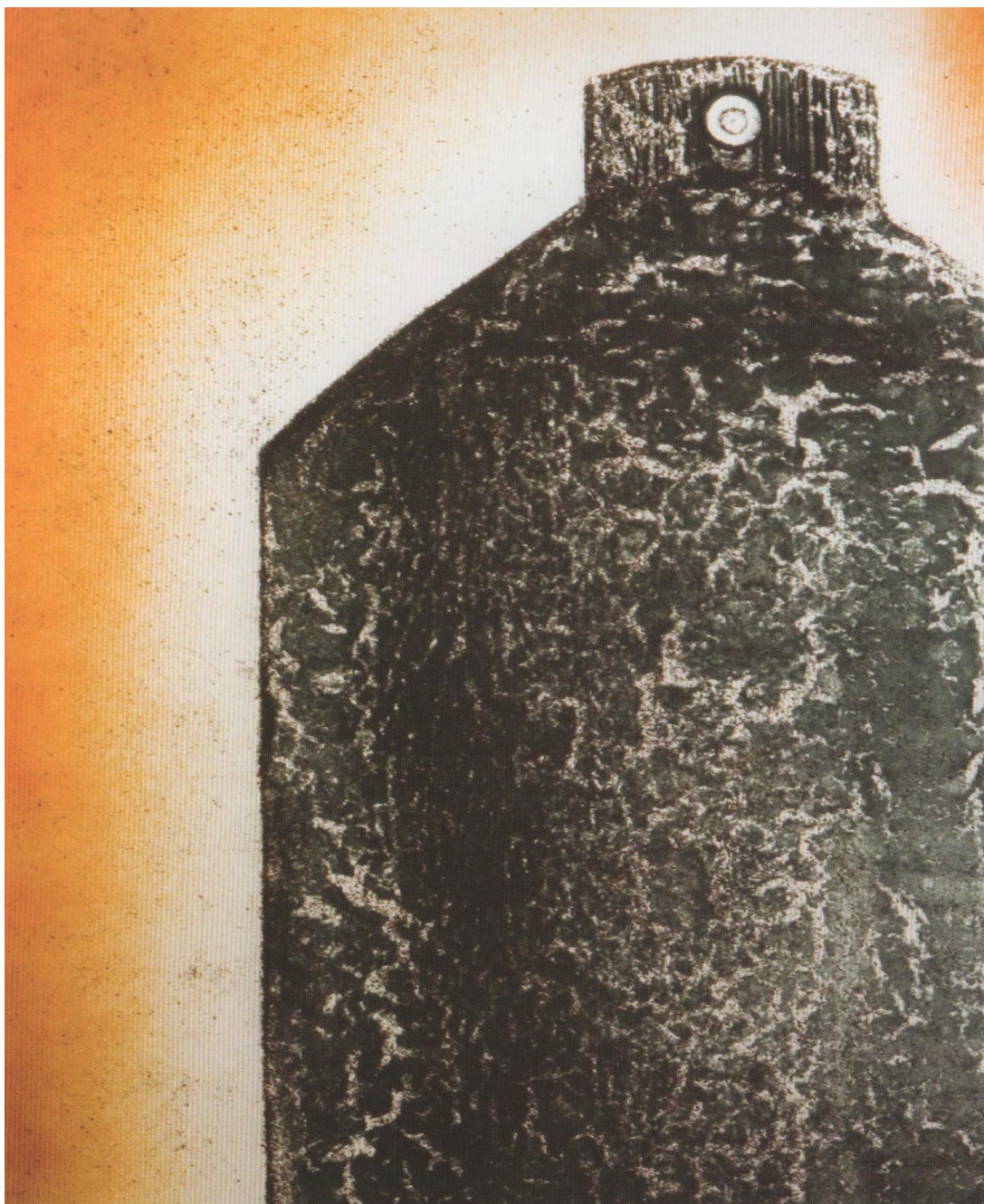


*Wave* (Sato, N., 2003)  
23cm x 1.8cm x 21cm high

Undulating blue cast and ribbed glass form, unsigned. (NLCG, 2005, p.54)

Conceptions of place - keywords:  
NATURE / SEA





*Spray Distress* (Sawyer, T., 1999)  
24cm x 38cm

A grey and brown abstraction of landscape and architectural elements from north east Scotland executed in kilnformed Bullseye Glass sheet and powders, signed Sawyer 1999. (NLCG, 2005, p.55)

Conceptions of place - keywords:

ARCHITECTURE / ARCHITECTURAL FORM

SEA

TIME / HISTORY

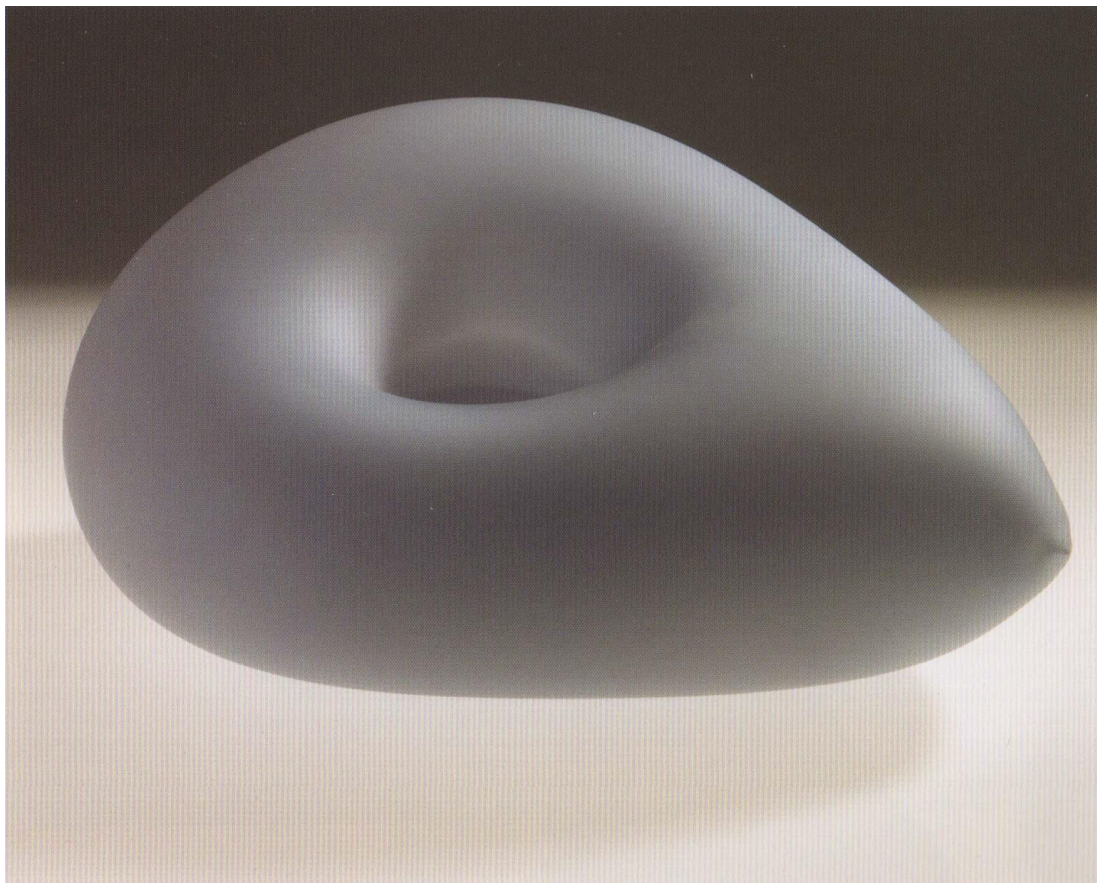




*Crowded House* (Smit, B., 2003)  
18.5cm x 12cm x 25.3cm high

Blown, cold worked and cast composition with a transparent house inside which are six architectural forms of different sizes inspired by local farm buildings and houses, unsigned. (NLGG, 2005, p.58)

Conceptions of place - keywords:  
ARCHITECTURE / ARCHITECTURAL FORM



*Puffin* (Thorsøe, L., 2004)  
33cm x 25cm x 11cm high

Grey Blown glass form of asymmetric oval cushion shape with a central circular well, inspired by local puffin life, unsigned. (NLCG, 2005, p.61)

Conceptions of place - keywords:  
WILDLIFE/LIVING CREATURES/NATURE  
SEA



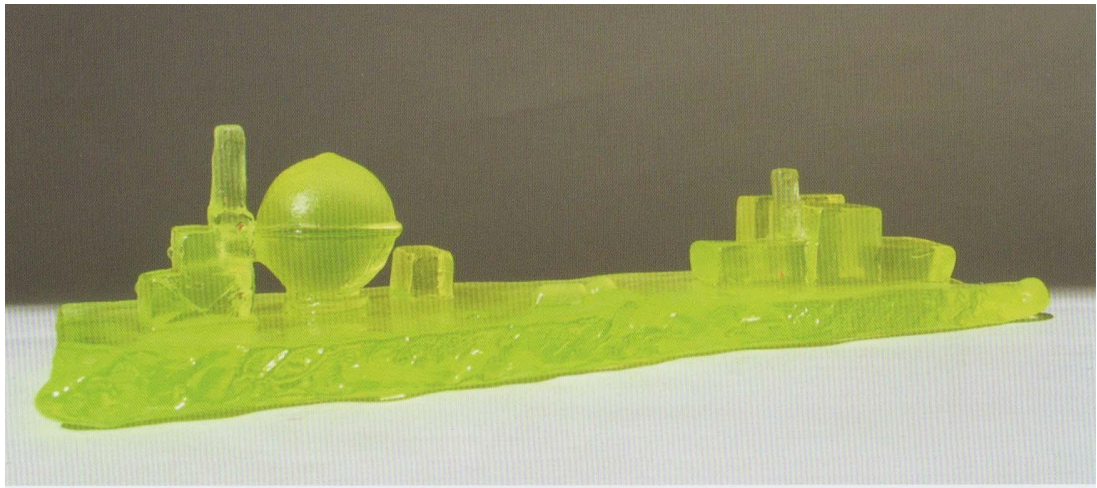


*Whaligoe* (Timoko, M., 2005)  
15.5cm x 8cm x 21.5cm high

Cast glass sculptural group in grey/green glass composed of two fisher women carrying baskets, on stepped rectangular plinth base, inspired by the women who carried herring loads from the sea in creels up 350 steps, diamond point signature  
*Whaligoe* Marea Timoko 2005. (NLCG, 2005, p.62)

Conceptions of place - keywords:  
HISTORY / INDUSTRY / FISHING / SEA

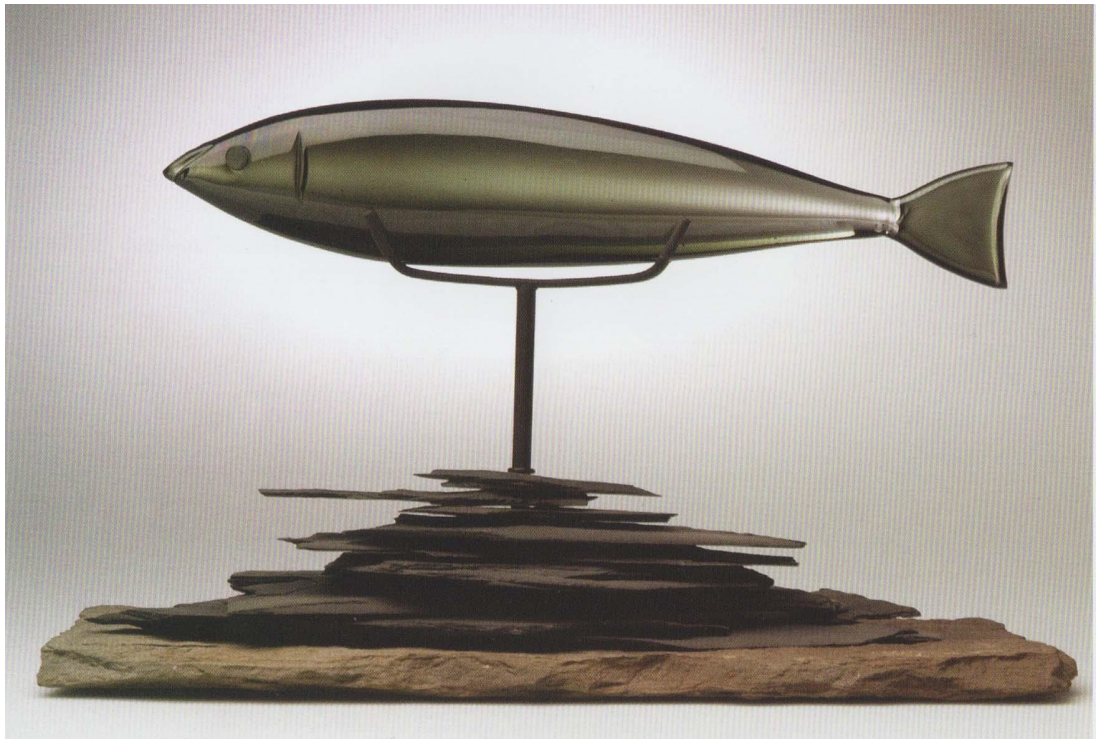




*Dounreay* (Williams, K., 2006)  
70cm long x 30cm wide x 15cm high

Lost wax, kiln cast uranium glass. (NLCG, 2005, p.69)

Conceptions of place - keywords:  
ARCHITECTURE / ARCHITECTURAL FORM  
INDUSTRY



*Untitled* (Wirdnam, N., 2002)

Length of fish 30cm, stone base 33cm x 15cm, overall height 21cm

Blown grey glass fish held in a metal mount above a base formed of stone and slate, signed in the stone N.Wirdnam 2002. (NLCG, 2005, p.70)

Conceptions of place - keywords:

HISTORY / INDUSTRY / FISHING / SEA

WILDLIFE/LIVING CREATURES/NATURE

## Appendix 4      Timeline

**July 3rd - 11th, 2009**

Masterclass participant, 'Light + Colour = Form' (North Lands Creative Glass, Lybster - see Bruce (2009a)).



This class will aim to strike a balance between hands-on-making, drawing, thinking, talking and working from direct experience of the local environment. The north east coast of Scotland is a land of brilliant and ever changing light, which begs to be experienced and explored. Focused in the kiln area, Bullseye glass and kiln casting will be the material and process through which the North Lands' light and colour will be investigated, manipulated and modulated to give ideas form and life. By using individual research and considering the inherent material qualities of glass, students will be encouraged to formulate ideas and create objects appropriate to the material. The primary emphasis of the course will be to examine different routes from idea/source to final work, the focus being on the process from one to the other rather than the end product itself. Different material properties for model and mould making will also be explored to enrich the possibilities of working and problem solving, and each student will be asked to participate in presentations to share their knowledge, ideas and experience.

**Jane Bruce** is currently an independent artist and educator living in New York City. Born in England, Bruce received an MA degree from the Royal College of Art, London, and undertook further post-graduate study at the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred. She has taught extensively in the US, Canada and Europe. She was a lecturer in the Glass Workshop, Australian National University from 1994 – 2004, including Head of Workshop 2001-2003, and was Artistic Director of North Lands Creative Glass, Scotland, from 2003-2007. Her work can be found in many prestigious museums' collections world wide.

**Bruno Romanelli** is a British glass maker of Italian descent. After completing his BA at Staffordshire Polytechnic, he went on to do his Masters at RCA in London where he has continued to live and work. He made his name with his distinctive figurative sculptures, but more recently his work explores more basic principles of colour and form with the vessel as a central motif.



**June 3rd - 10th, 2010:**

Assistant / participant, *In Place: Kiln Formed Glass in the Built Environment* (North Lands Creative Glass, Lybster)

During the North Lands conference in September 2009, the author was introduced to Steve Klein<sup>1</sup> by Lani McGregor, a partner in Bullseye Glass Company (the sponsor of *Light + Colour = Form*) and the director of the Bullseye Gallery<sup>2</sup>. Together with Richard Parrish<sup>3</sup>, Klein was in the process of planning a short residency which was to be held at North Lands in June 2010, with a focus on 'making kiln-glass work that exists in and is inspired by the constructed (built) environment, and, by extension, the natural environment in which a building is located' (Klein, S., 2009). The author was invited to attend the residency both as a participant and as one of two local assistants. Differing from the format of a class, group discussion and the exploration of ideas were to be central, with each participant defining and leading the direction and depth of their investigation.

Prior to the residency, the author researched the background of two local buildings (Harbour House and St. Mary's Church, Lybster) which were to be offered to the artists as optional case studies; discussing the purpose and potential use of these, Klein writes:

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<sup>1</sup> Artist biography: 'Steve Klein has taught, studied, and shown his art in exhibitions and workshops throughout the US, the UK, Australia, and Taiwan. In both 2002 and 2005, he completed artist residencies at the Pilchuck Glass School in Stanwood, Washington. Klein has been featured in Neues Glas, American Craft and Glass Quarterly. His work is a part of the collections of the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, North Lands Creative Glass in Lybster, Scotland, and the Museo del Vidrio in La Granja, Spain.' (Bullseye Gallery, 2013c)

<sup>2</sup> '[Part of Bullseye Glass Company,] Bullseye Gallery offers contemporary art objects and experiences examining the potential and complexity of kilnformed glass. The gallery also explores glass in the built environment, inviting art into architecture through collaborations with artists, designers, architects and clients.'

<sup>2</sup> 'The gallery hosts artist lectures, panel discussions, and events which encourage dialogue about the concepts and processes driving contemporary art.' (Bullseye Gallery, 2013d)

<sup>3</sup> Artist biography: 'Richard Parrish maintains a studio for kilnformed glass and architecture in Bozeman, Montana. He holds a Master of Architecture degree from the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan and a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Idaho in Moscow. He was awarded best artist in his category at the Western Design Conference Exhibition in 2008 and 2009. His work was selected for the Corning Museum of Glass' New Glass Review 27, and he was awarded the American Craft Council Award of Achievement in 2003. His artwork is in public and private collections in the United States and Europe.' (Bullseye Gallery, 2013e)

‘Each participant will determine his/her specific project work at North Lands. We expect that there will be a wide range of explorations, from large scale architectural glass to small scale objects. In a sense, North Lands will be a laboratory to explore, discover and discuss how the spirit of a place (built and natural) informs our work and how our work can be “of the place” and, in turn, add to the unique and special nature of that place. Our intent is that these explorations will advance each participant’s way of thinking and working in architectural/art glass’. (Klein, S., 2009)

### ***June 26th - July 4th, 2010***

Participant, *Place, Light and Space: A North Lands Symposium* (North Lands Creative Glass, Lybster)

In early winter 2009 the author received an invitation from Jane Bruce to participate in a short symposium, which was to be held at North Lands the following summer. Described not as a class, but ‘as a self-defined, self-directed 'structured' opportunity to create work in a collegiate atmosphere with a group of like-minded artists’, place was to be a central focus for the symposium, as the following excerpt from the outline document illustrates :

‘Our ideas are rooted in our sense of place and formed by our immediate surroundings. But what is the meaning of ‘place’ in the age of globalization and what happens to these ideas when transferred from their place of origin to another, different place? The environs of North Lands resonate with the past and present. Over the many millennium humanity has left signs and monuments in the Caithness landscape, which reach out to us today like messages still waiting to be deciphered. The local landscape, architecture, space, light, and history will all be considered as points of departure for a self-directed investigation into what happens when ideas are relocated into a different environment and time’. (Bruce, 2009b)

It was also made clear from the outline that a key aim of the symposium was to provide an opportunity to strengthen and expand current work, uncovering and encouraging new routes or ideas through group discussions.

### ***November 1st - December 13th, 2010***

Mixed Media Residency (North Lands Creative Glass, Lybster)

Open to ‘Scottish based artists with an interest in kiln forming glass [but] who are not familiar with the material’ (North Lands Creative Glass, 2010), this residency offered the author an ideal platform to develop her creative practice whilst simultaneously exploring her changing relationship with place within the context of Lybster. Highlighting her background in architecture and my beginnings in glass, the author’s application outlined her intentions to consider the dialogue between the two in a further examination of my own attachment to place; through exploring the translation of drawings and photographs into three-dimensional form, her aim was to both consider and communicate the power of light and shadow in relation to narrative, experience and memory of place.

### ***June 2011:***

*BECon 2011: Crossover* (Portland, Oregon, U.S.A.)

Following her time on the *In Place* residency earlier in 2010, the author had been invited to speak as part of a panel at the then forthcoming Bullseye Glass Co. conference (BECon<sup>4</sup>) in Portland, Oregon, in June 2011; parallel to this, she had also been invited to both submit some pieces of work for a corresponding exhibition at Bullseye Gallery (also in Portland), and to co-teach a post-conference workshop with Richard Parrish at the Bullseye Glass Co. Research Centre. The focus of the event - titled *Crossover: A Material Exchange* - was on ‘exploring the interface between kiln-glass and other media such as painting, architecture, photography, digital technologies, printmaking

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Every two years, aspiring and accomplished kiln-glass professionals from around the globe gather in Portland to network, compare notes and expand their horizons. This gathering is known as BECon (the Bullseye Conference).

<sup>4</sup> Bullseye has sponsored BECon since 2003, and today it’s the world’s foremost kiln-glass conference. Each BECon explores a special topic through lectures, panel discussions and demonstrations led by noted artists, architects and other experts and leaders in kilnformed glass. In concert with each conference, Bullseye Gallery hosts a related exhibition and the Bullseye Research & Education Department hosts pre- and post-conference workshops.’ (Bullseye Glass, 2013c)



and textiles' (Bullseye Glass, 2013c); her contributions to the proceeding will be discussed subsequently.

### ***June 18th, 2011***

Presenter, *In Place: Kiln-glass in the Built Environment*, BECon 2011.

Of those who attended the *In Place* residency, three had architectural backgrounds - Richard Parrish, Laurel Porcari, owner of NOKO Studio for fine art and architectural kilnformed glass commissions in New Orleans, Louisiana, and the author. Following the success of the residency, they were invited to speak on a panel at BECon 2011 on the topic of kiln-glass in the built environment, reflecting on the work they had each produced during their time together at North Lands. This panel discussion was moderated by Rick Potestio, a respected and well known Portland-based architect who had previously participated on a Bullseye residency (titled *Multiplied Light*) which had investigated the possibilities of kilnformed glass in the creation of chandeliers. Offering the perspective of both a non-resident and of a practicing architect familiar with working in kiln-glass, Rick's role was to pose engaging questions and to stimulate the discussion following individual presentations of work.

### ***June 1st - August 20th, 2011***

*Crossover*, Bullseye Gallery, Portland, Oregon, U.S.A.

*Crossover*, the corresponding show in the Bullseye Gallery, contained works by many of the conference presenters, and demonstrated the relationship between works in kiln-glass and non-glass; comprising pieces made by eighteen makers (from Argentina, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States), the focus of the exhibition was to 'explore the ways in which ideas are translated and transformed as artists move from one medium to another' (Bullseye Gallery 2011a) (Figure 6.41). The author was invited to submit five

sculptural works (plus five corresponding drawings) for inclusion in this show - *Camster*, *Harbour House Series 1* and *2*, *Dunbeath Strath: Maquette 4*, and *Berriedale Shore: Maquette 3*.



*Crossover*, Bullseye Gallery, Portland

### ***June 20th - 28th, 2011***

Co-facilitator (with Richard Parrish), *In Place: A Cross-disciplinary Approach to Kilnformed Glass in the Built Environment*, Bullseye Glass Resource Centre, Portland, Oregon.

In line with the over-arching theme of *Crossover*, the premise of this workshop was to consider and explore differences in approach to place between makers with architectural and non-architectural backgrounds.

Despite bearing relation in terms of topic, to discuss the content or results of this workshop - held at a time when the direction and aims of this research will still taking shape and were not yet fully realised - would be beyond the scope of this thesis; although the focus of this study lies on the development of a generalized strategy for place, the intention remains for it to be uncovered and demonstrated within a particular context, meaning that it would be inappropriate for any comparisons to be drawn between these two different contexts.



**August 26th - September 16th, 2011:**

Exhibitor, *Touching the Past* (Quatre Bras Gallery, North Lands Creative Glass, Lybster)

An invitation-only exhibition to correspond with the 2011 North Lands Conference (also titled *Touching the Past*). The author, along with five other artists, was asked by Mieke Groot (North Lands' artistic director at that time, and curator of the exhibition), to submit four pieces of work influenced by time spent at North Lands and the surrounding context.



Images exhibited in *Touching the Past*, North Lands Creative Glass gallery  
From left to right: 'Big Peter's', Dunbeath; Camster Round; stone vaults, Castlehill House, Castletown; and Milton Inn, Dunbeath Strath

**September 20th - 30th, 2011**

Assistant, *In Place: Kiln Formed Glass in the Built Environment*, North Lands Creative Glass, Lybster

Keen to build upon the success of the original event the previous year, a second *In Place* residency was planned by Steve Klein and Richard Parrish in 2011; on this occasion, the author was the sole assistant, tasked (as per the previous residency) with researching and compiling documentation on case studies and field trips, as well as providing support within the studio.

**November 4th - 6th, 2011**

Exhibitor with Bullseye Gallery, *SOFA Chicago 2011* (Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.)

Resulting from the response to her work which had been exhibited in *Crossover* earlier in the year, the author was invited to be one of eleven artists showing with Bullseye Gallery at SOFA Chicago 2011<sup>5</sup>. The works selected for exhibition were both of the *Harbour House, Lybster* series, and two corresponding drawings - *Harbour House, Lybster: Long Section*, and *Harbour House, Lybster: Sections 2*.

Speaking during the lecture series which ran in correlation with the exposition was Denise Mullen, President of Oregon College of Art and Design in Portland; addressing the topic of *CROSSOVER to Glass: A Material Exchange*, her presentation delivered insights from BECon 2011, discussing the work of various presenters (including the author) and a selection of the topics covered during the conference.

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<sup>5</sup> 'The 18th Annual Sculpture Objects and Functional Art Fair, SOFA CHICAGO 2011, enjoys the prestigious position of being the largest and longest continually running international gallery-based art fair in Chicago, a mainstay of the city's cultural and social calendar [...]. SOFA CHICAGO 2011 features more than 60 international art galleries and dealers presenting museum-quality art and design for sale. SOFA galleries bridge a wide range of cultures, art movements and historical periods.' (ArtDaily, n.d.)

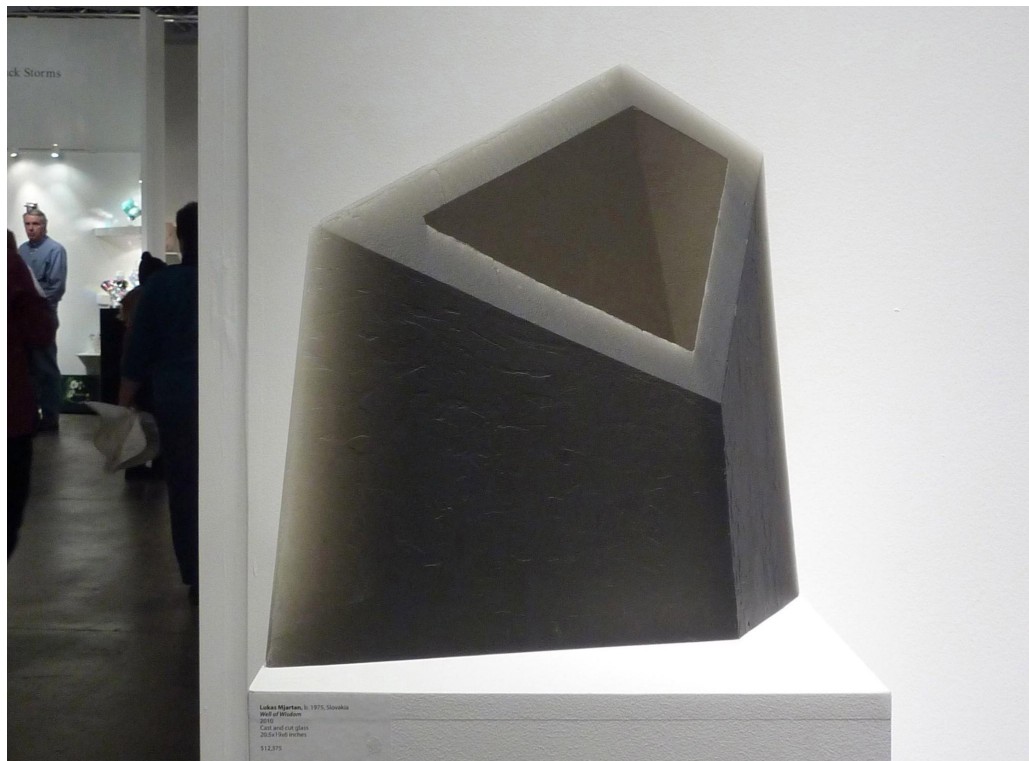


Bullseye Gallery booth, SOFA Chicago 2011

Attending SOFA afforded the author the opportunity to view a wide range of pieces by internationally renowned artists; unquestionably, the most significant of these was Lukas Mjartan's *Well of Wisdom*<sup>6</sup>, a planar, geometric form which began to play with the viewer's sense of perspective and depth. Whilst visiting other booths, the author also chanced upon a series of pieces by Holly Grace - one of four artists in residence at North Lands earlier in 2011 - who was exhibiting at SOFA with Canberra-based Beaver Galleries; instantly recognisable from her explorations related to the Caithness landscape were the pieces *Lybster Main Street*, *Lybster* and *The Churchyard II* (Figures 6.47, 6.48 and 6.49). Testament to her memories and experience of place, it was a somewhat surreal but reassuring experience to unexpectedly stumble upon what felt like a little piece of Lybster at such an international event in a city on the other side of the world; as one of the first instances where the author had seen work influenced by the context of

<sup>6</sup>Artist biography: 'Lukas Mjartan is a glass artist living and working in Slovakia. His major interest lies in kiln-formed glass, especially in cast glass [...]. He draws his inspiration from various architectural forms transforming them into contrasting rigid geometric shapes with structural, sometimes even rough gestural textures and elements. The light and the varying thickness of the glass mass play with the intensity of each colour he chooses for his works, thus creating expressive sculptural forms.' (Mjartan, n.d.)

Lybster and Caithness outside of the county, it was a very real and powerful reminder of the potentially far-reaching impact of place.



*Well of Wisdom*

Lukas Mjartan, 2009, cast and cut glass, 490(h) x 520(w) x 150(w) mm



*Lybster Main Street* (Beaver Galleries, 2011)

Holly Grace, 2011, blown and coldworked glass, 205(h) x 580(l) x 70(w) mm (installed)





*Lybster* (Beaver Galleries, 2011)

Holly Grace, 2011, blown and coldworked glass, 510(h) x 525(l) x 100(w) mm (installed)



*The Churchyard II* (Beaver Galleries, 2011)

Holly Grace, 2011, blown and coldworked glass, 220(h) x 381(l) x 70(w) mm (installed)

**July 5th - 13th, 2012**

Participant, *Highland Inspiration: A North Lands Symposium* (North Lands Creative Glass, Lybster)

A second symposium organised and led by Jane Bruce, following the same outline as 2010's *Place, Light and Space: A North Lands Symposium*.

**October 31st - December 22nd, 2012**

Exhibitor, *Conversations: Architectural Responses to Place* (Bullseye Gallery, Portland, Oregon, U.S.A).

Some months prior to the 2011 *In Place* residency, the author had been offered the opportunity to exhibit with Richard Parrish in a two-person show at Bullseye Gallery, Portland, in the following year. In addition to their backgrounds in architecture and a shared interest in place and the relationship between making and memory, Parrish (who had never visited Caithness before the *In Place* residencies) had discovered a deep personal connection with the north Highlands, and was particularly drawn to the historic structures, the natural environment, and the quality of the light.

Alongside this common ground, the author and Parrish also had several significant differences which were to shape their dialogue and subsequent work; in terms of architectural career, hers was just beginning, whilst he had exited the profession several years prior; in terms of work in glass, Parrish pursued a language that was reminiscent of aerial views of landscapes, whereas the author's interest lay in the communication of architectural conditions and space. In addition, as a native of Lybster and Caithness, the author's perspective of (and relationship with) culture and place within this context were distinctly different.

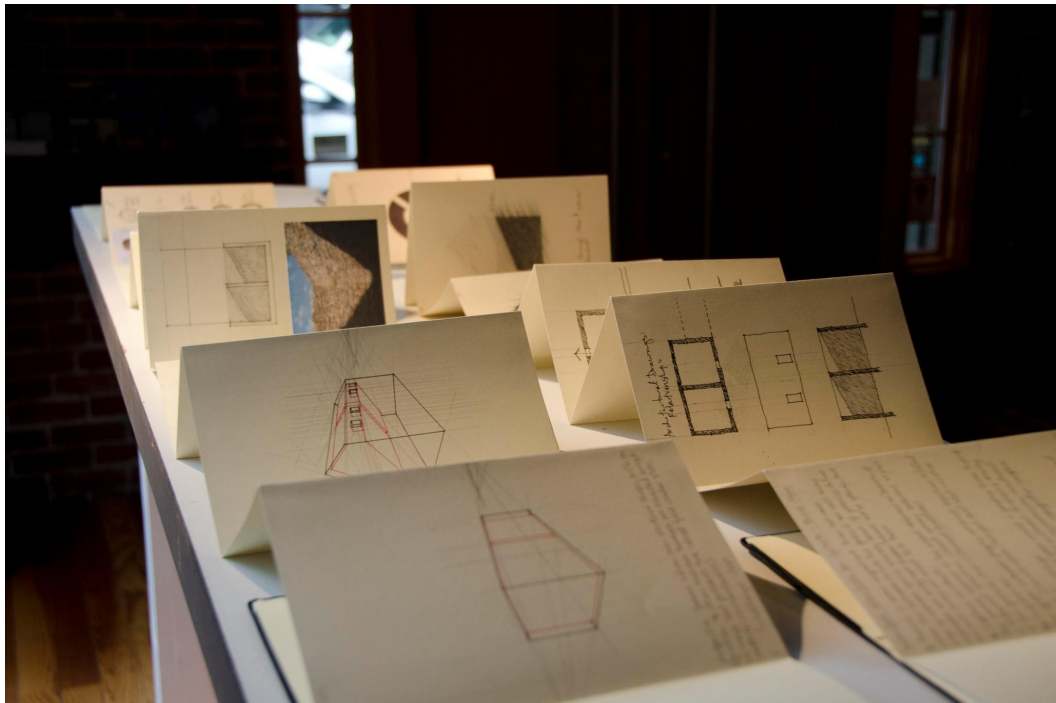
Both the direction and content of the exhibition were left open, and it seemed obvious that it would centre around Lybster and Caithness. With Parrish based in Montana, and the author in Scotland, they chose to document their

future dialogue through sketchbooks which were exchanged by post at regular intervals. Ranging from the remains of iron age brochs to 19th century industrial sites, the places which formed the basis of these conversations about place were abandoned and derelict, and all were of cultural and historical importance.



Conversations, Nybster Broch

‘There is a universal desire to find, create, and discuss place. Place, differing from space or location, is experiential and exists between the subjective and objective realm. It is, as Gaston Bachelard explains, poetic, conflating memory, emotion, and the senses. A new conversation about place was sparked when two architects cum artists, Richard Parrish and Karlyn Sutherland, met in the highlands of Scotland during a residency at North Lands Creative Glass. Now an ocean apart, in Montana and Scotland respectively, the conversation has continued, culminating in an exhibition of kilnformed glass, drawing, and installation. The ideas that surround place - a sense of place, a place to call home, a private place - are unexceptional, but these ideas are deeply tied to our sense of self and our experience of the world, which can range from inchoate emotion to explicit conception. There are, consequently, no definitive answers, only conversations’. (Bullseye Gallery, 2012a)



Sketchbooks  
Photographer: Michael Endo, Bullseye Gallery



Installation, Bullseye Gallery  
Photographer: Michael Endo, Bullseye Gallery





Installation, Bullseye Gallery  
Photographer: Michael Endo, Bullseye Gallery



Installation, Bullseye Gallery  
Photographer: Michael Endo, Bullseye Gallery



Opening reception, Bullseye Gallery  
Photographer: Michael Endo, Bullseye Gallery

**November 4th -10th, 2012**

Visiting Artist, Alberta College of Art and Design (Calgary, Alberta, Canada).

Following Bullseye Gallery's pre-exhibition publicity, the author received an invitation to spend a short period of time as visiting artist in the glass department of Alberta College and Design in Calgary, Canada; travelling there after the opening in Portland, she delivered both a presentation on the development of her work and a series of demonstrations on the process of maquette making.

**March 7th - 29th, 2013**

*Conversations: Architectural Responses to Place* at AIA Portland (The Center for Architecture, Portland, Oregon).

Installment of a selection of key pieces from the author's previous show with Richard Parrish at Bullseye Gallery.

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